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Summary record of the 1st meeting
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Chairman: Mr. Kuchinsky. . . . . (Ukraine)
later: Ms. Groux (Vice-Chairperson) . . . . (Switzerland)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Statement by the Chairman

1. **The Chairman**, noting the importance of the work of the Committee, said that he looked forward to the "question time" and dialogues with representatives of the Secretary-General, special rapporteurs and independent experts, which would promote a better understanding of the issues being examined and raise the level of the deliberations. He was convinced that he could count on the representatives of the Member States and the members of the Bureau, who had already had discussions during both official and informal meetings, to cooperate in order to ensure the success of the Committee's work.

Organization of work (A/59/250, A/C.3/59/1, A/C.3/59/L.1/Rev.1 and A/C.3/59/L.1/Add.1)

2. **The Chairman** drew the attention of the members of the Committee to chapter II of the report of the General Committee (A/59/250), which established guidelines regarding the conduct of work, relating, among other things, to punctuality, length of statements and rights of reply, and adherence to deadlines imposed for the submission of draft resolutions and inclusion in the list of speakers. He emphasized three guidelines, relating to: (a) the number of resolutions and reports requested of the Secretary-General; (b) the length of resolutions; (c) the need for delegations to allow sufficient time for estimates of expenditures to be prepared by the Secretariat and considered by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee. In view of the volume of the Committee's work, he requested the delegations to maintain discipline and pointed out that, in accordance with the decision of the General Assembly, during the final two weeks of Ramadan, from 1 to 11 November 2004, the schedule of sessions would be adjusted.

3. He recommended that, barring unforeseen events, the timetable adopted by the Committee should be respected. It was particularly important for draft resolutions, which generally required lengthy negotiations, to be prepared by the principal sponsors as early as possible. Delegations initiating proposals were further requested to advise the Chairman accordingly in order for him to establish a list of those initiatives in due time.

4. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee), before introducing documents A/C.3/59/L.1/Rev.1 and A/C.3/59/L.1/Add.1, drew attention to two developments in connection with the agenda items allocated to the Committee. First of all, the Committee for Programme and Coordination had recommended at its forty-eighth session that programme 19, Human rights, of the proposed strategic framework for the period 2006-2007, should be referred to the Third Committee for consideration and appropriate action and that the matter should be submitted subsequently to the Fifth Committee for consideration, within the context of the proposed strategic framework for the period 2006-2007, under item 109 (Programme planning). In a letter addressed to the Chairman of the Third Committee, the President of the General Assembly formally stated that the Assembly, at its 18th plenary meeting, had decided, in accordance with section III, paragraph 4, of its resolution 57/282, to refer that item to the Third Committee for consideration and appropriate action. Second, in accordance with section D, paragraph (c), of General Assembly resolution 58/316, the President of the Assembly concluded that the fact that the item entitled "Report of the Economic and Social Council" was being considered in plenary meeting should not prevent the Third Committee from considering and taking action on the draft resolutions contained in chapter I of the report of the Economic and Social Council. Consequently, the 13 drafts that the Council had adopted by consensus would be referred to the Third Committee, which would consider them under agenda items 94 (two drafts), 96 (seven drafts), 97 (three drafts) and 102 (one draft).

5. Regarding the guidelines established for the conduct of the work of the Committee, he said that according to document A/C.3/59/L.1/Rev.1, statements on the various items during a general discussion were limited to 7 minutes for delegations and 15 minutes for groups of delegations. Delegations wishing to have the text of their statement distributed must provide 350 copies to the conference officers before the meeting. When item 105 (Human rights questions) was taken up, delegations could make one statement under each of sub-items (a) and (d), which were to be discussed sequentially. They could make up to two statements under sub-items (b), (c) and (e), which were to be considered together, but could not make two statements under the same sub-item. Under agenda items 103 (Elimination of racism and racial discrimination) and

104 (Right of peoples to self-determination), which were to be discussed jointly, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 58/542 delegations could make two separate statements, i.e., one on each item, if they so wished.

6. As numerous draft resolutions were presented at each meeting, thus overburdening the Secretariat's documentation services, delegations submitting a draft containing text taken from an earlier resolution were requested to download the earlier official document from the United Nations Official Document System (ODS) and to indicate clearly, preferably in boldface characters, either in the electronic version or on the hard copy, any changes or new text. Similarly, in the case of revised draft resolutions, the drafts should be sent to the Secretariat by e-mail or in hard copy, accompanied by the signed list of sponsors and co-sponsors. Sponsors desirous of presenting drafts should inform the Secretary of the Committee as soon as possible in order to enable him to make the appropriate arrangements. Delegations should abide strictly by the deadlines set for the submission of draft resolutions.

7. Noting that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 58/316, the Committee's web site had been enhanced, he said that a limited-access site had been created which delegations could access by means of a password and on which they could post unofficial documents. Representatives wishing to obtain a password should fill in the appropriate form and provide an e-mail address at which the password would be sent to them.

8. **The Chairman** said it was his understanding that the Committee wished to adopt the programme of work contained in document A/C.3/59/L.1/Rev.1 and the arrangements indicated orally by the Secretary.

9. *It was so decided.*

10. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee), after reading out the list of special rapporteurs and independent experts, said that he had just received a request to invite two additional special rapporteurs and an additional independent expert.

11. **The Chairman** recommended postponing the consideration of the request to a later date. It was his understanding that the Committee wished to approve the list of special rapporteurs and independent experts read out by the Secretary.

12. *It was so decided.*

13. **Mr. Hof** (European Union), mentioning several resolutions that the Committee was to consider during the current session, reaffirmed the European Union's interest in the role played by special rapporteurs and independent experts and noted that the Union had been in favour of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 presenting his report at the previous session. He expressed the wish that, as quickly as possible, the Committee should consider inviting, in addition to the persons included in the list it had just approved, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences; the independent expert to assist the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in examining the question of the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, in accordance with Commission on Human Rights resolution 2004/87; and the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially in women and children.

14. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee), drawing the attention of the members to chapter II of the report of the General Committee of the General Assembly (A/59/250), which contained rules pertaining to the financing of work, remarked that inviting two additional special rapporteurs and an additional independent expert would have financial implications and stated that the Programme Planning and Budget Division should be able to present an estimate of expenditures within 48 hours of the Committee's decision.

15. **Mr. Reyes** (Cuba) expressed surprise at the European Union's request, which it was basing on the decision adopted the previous year, when the situation had been different. The request went against the rationalization of the working methods of the United Nations system. If the Committee decided to invite the three persons proposed by the European Union, it should also agree to invite the independent expert on the effects of structural adjustment policies and foreign debt, because the debt problem represented a major obstacle to development in third-world countries. In the specific case of the independent expert to assist the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in examining the question of the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, which fell within the purview of the Office of the High Commissioner, not the Third Committee, inviting that expert to present his report to the

Committee would amount to violating his mandate. His delegation was against the idea of financing the invitation of special rapporteurs and independent experts through voluntary contributions, as that would favour the rich countries, which would then be able to impose their views on the Committee. In the final analysis, it would be preferable to abide by the existing list so as to avoid any overlapping of activities and respect the decisions taken by the intergovernmental bodies.

16. **Ms. Khalil** (Egypt) said that, while her delegation was favourable to the idea of inviting special rapporteurs and independent experts owing to their significant contributions to the work of the Committee, she would appreciate further details, especially regarding the criteria for choosing the persons proposed by the European Union, the financial implications and the speaking time that would be allotted to such rapporteurs and experts, to enable the members of the Committee to make an informed decision.

17. **The Chairman** called upon the members of the Committee to hold discussions with a view to arriving at a decision on the question, if possible by the end of the week.

18. *It was so decided.*

19. **The Chairman** suggested appointing as Facilitator, pursuant to section C, paragraph (a), of the annex to General Assembly resolution 58/316, Ms. Astanah Banu Shri Abdul Aziz of Malaysia (Vice-Chairperson), who would be charged with holding informal consultations on the further rationalization of the Third Committee's programme and methods of work.

20. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 93: Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly

Agenda item 94: Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family

(a) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family

(b) United Nations Literacy Decade: education for all

Agenda item 95: Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing

21. **Mr. Schölvinck** (Director, Division for Social Policy and Development), referring to the report of the Secretary-General on social development (A/59/120), pointed out that more focus should be placed on the principle of a people-centred approach to development, which remained too abstract a concept. The path towards social development was fraught with gaps between theory and practice which stemmed from three causes. The first was the social impact of globalization. The understanding and management of social development within the framework of globalization were inadequate and the issues raised in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development had not been pursued to the extent anticipated. The report to be drafted by the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization should help to correct that situation. National and international macroeconomic policies and social goals were the second cause. As had been emphasized at the World Summit for Social Development, it was necessary to create an enabling economic environment, which could be achieved only through the adoption of appropriate economic policies. Considerable substantive and political difficulties had yet to be surmounted in order for national and international economic policies to be effective and coherent. It was essential, moreover, to bridge the artificial divide between social questions and economic issues. The third cause related to the capacity of national Governments to undertake social policies, for although social development was a national responsibility, it could not be achieved without the collective commitment and efforts of the international community. Yet the actual exercise of such responsibility was increasingly difficult and countries seemed to be losing their autonomy as they became part of the world economy. The report was of particular significance because it was closely related to the five-year review of the Millennium Declaration and the year 2005 would mark the tenth anniversary of the World Summit for Social Development.

22. It was clear from the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Preparations for and observance of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2004" (A/59/176) that the family continued to play a crucial role in social and human development and the protection of individuals, but that its contribution to the achievement of the objectives of eradication of poverty and the creation of a just, stable and secure society had generally been overlooked. Certain economic and social factors, such as the HIV/AIDS pandemic or demographic ageing and retirement, continued to have a significant impact on societies and families. Activities had been undertaken within the framework of the United Nations Programme on the Family. In addition, on 1 September 2004 a new focal point on the family had been appointed within the Division for Social Policy and Development, and on 6 December 2004 a plenary meeting of the General Assembly would be devoted to the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family.

23. With regard to disabled persons, the Commission for Social Development had recommended to the General Assembly that it consider the suggested supplement to the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (E/CN.5/2004/4). Although there was no report on persons with disabilities before the Third Committee, the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities was on its agenda under item 105, "Human rights questions". As that issue went well beyond human rights questions, it should be dealt with under the item relating specifically to persons with disabilities. Such an approach would not only increase the visibility of the Convention, but would also demonstrate the importance of mainstreaming disability within overall development issues.

24. In terms of the report of the Secretary-General on ageing (A/59/164), the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing was marked both by progress and by obstacles. While major strides had been made, and the "ageing dimension" of development had moved forward considerably, much remained to be done to integrate older persons into national and international development frameworks. United Nations system organizations had undertaken to implement the decisions adopted at the Second World Assembly on Ageing, particularly the World Health Organization and the United Nations Development Programme, which were working to mainstream ageing into all their activities, policies and programmes. Nevertheless, the human and financial resources devoted to promotion of the social inclusion of ageing were extremely limited, and that constituted a major constraint on the implementation of the Madrid Plan.

25. The Committee played an important role in the search for common solutions to common problems; it was essential not to separate economic issues from social issues, for the two were closely intertwined in the development sphere. It was therefore necessary to overcome compartmentalization; the Third Committee should emphasize collaboration, particularly with the Second Committee.

26. **Ms. Launay** (Director, UNESCO Office at the United Nations), speaking under agenda item 94 (b), referred to the report on the implementation of the International Plan of Action for the United Nations Literacy Decade (A/59/267). The Decade had been launched in 2003 in various regions of the world, with the participation of non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, development agencies and United Nations agencies, programmes and funds. Having chosen as its rallying cry "Literacy as freedom", the Decade played a fundamental role, for literacy was a means of creating a society committed to peace, democracy, social justice and general well-being.

27. Currently, more than 100 million children were out of school and some 800 million adults, mostly girls and women, were illiterate. It was essential to be able to read, write and do arithmetic in order to have access to information regarding health, the environment, education and the world of work. Literacy was therefore vital to improving the lives of all and promoting development in all its dimensions.

28. Unfortunately, the importance of literacy was not adequately recognized, and literacy was a low priority on the education agenda in many countries. Unless effective actions were taken, almost 80 countries in the world would not be able to achieve the Education for All (EFA) literacy goal set at the World Education Forum (Dakar, April 2000), namely, a 50 per cent improvement in adult literacy levels by 2015. The international community, Governments, non-governmental organizations, civil society and the

private sector must therefore act in concert and adopt serious and sustained measures.

29. In 2005 the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) would launch a new adult literacy initiative, focused on countries with an illiteracy rate of over 50 per cent and/or an illiterate population larger than 10 million, or 33 countries in all. The initiative, focused on literacy for the excluded, would have a particular emphasis on women and should be supported by all development partners.

30. Synergy must be ensured between the Literacy Decade and EFA initiatives, such as the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) and the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative, the Millennium Development Goals agenda and the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, to be launched in 2005. While action was needed at all levels, national Governments were the most crucial actors; they needed the greatest possible support from the United Nations system and development agencies. Meanwhile, non-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector should be more closely involved in national literacy efforts.

31. **Mr. Cumberbach Miguén** (Cuba) asked the Director of the Division for Social Policy and Development to indicate what changes in national and international macroeconomic policy he felt were necessary to achieve social goals, inasmuch as most third-world countries remained saddled with a huge burden of external debt and had for many years been required to make structural adjustments that had genuinely hampered government agencies in their efforts to provide social protection.

32. **Ms. Al Haj Ali** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that, in order to follow up the recommendations and suggestions made by the Secretary-General in his report on preparations for and observance of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2004 (A/59/176), her Government had established a National Family Agency to protect the family and promote all issues relating thereto. The agency was contributing to the preparations for and observance of the tenth anniversary of the Year by highlighting the problems facing Syrian families. Her delegation requested the Director of the Division for Social Policy and Development to give delegations a general idea of what they could expect from the United Nations as far as the observance on 6 December was concerned.

33. **Ms. Ahmed** (Sudan), after taking note with satisfaction of the report of the Secretary-General on preparations for and observance of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2004 (A/59/176), welcomed the announcement by the Director of the Division for Social Policy and Development of the appointment of a new focal point on the family to monitor progress made by the United Nations in that area; she wished to know what practical steps had been taken by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to mark the observance on 6 December. She asked the Director of the Liaison Office of UNESCO to the United Nations whether there were any specific youth literacy projects focused on developing countries, particularly in Africa. Her delegation, which relied on UNESCO to play a pioneering role in that area, wholeheartedly supported the initiatives taken in developing countries. She also wished to know what innovative approaches had been adopted to combat illiteracy.

34. **Mr. Schölvinck** (Director of the Division for Social Policy and Development), replying to the Cuban delegation, said that social policies must be more integrated with economic policies; to that end, it was necessary to move away from a scale of priorities which tended to place economic issues ahead of social issues. There was also a need for better cooperation between finance ministers and ministers for social affairs so that, before policies were adopted, their consequences were established in a clear and transparent way. The same precautions were needed at the international level. Before a genuinely people-centred approach could be adopted, social policies must be taken fully into account in integrated policy-making.

35. Replying to the Syrian and Sudanese delegations, he said that specific steps had been taken by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to mark the 6 December observance. Specifically, in the morning, a plenary meeting of the Assembly would offer Member States an opportunity to report on the measures they had adopted to achieve the objectives of the International Year of the Family. In the afternoon, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs planned to organize, through its focal point on the family, a parallel event which would probably take the form of a round table.

36. **Ms. Launay** (Director, UNESCO Office at the United Nations), replying to the questions put to her, said that there was a need to connect all the dots between the "six Dakar goals" of Education for All and its 12 strategies and the two Millennium Development Goals which supported the overall goal of education for all. The difficulty of compiling statistics arose at each stage. In that connection, she welcomed the efforts undertaken by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics in Montreal to establish models in cooperation with Member States. While the statistics contained in the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4* (A/59/267) were of high quality, they were definitely incomplete, because they did not take into account crucial factors, such as the fact that in some countries extracurricular education was as important as traditional education. Lastly, while Member States generally did not lack a will, some lacked a way. Generally speaking, it was expected that by 2012 there would be a very sharp increase in the number of literate people around the world, political consciousness would develop, girls would have access to education on an equal basis with boys, and adult literacy would be as prevalent as child literacy.

37. UNESCO had a number of external offices, including several in Africa, as well as several institutes devoted solely to education; she drew attention, in particular, to the one in Addis Ababa, which was specifically concerned with capacity-building in Africa. She also noted one of the most recent adult literacy initiatives launched by UNESCO, which was focused on the 33 countries having an illiteracy rate of over 50 per cent or an illiterate population larger than 10 million.

38. **Ms. Abeysekera** (Sri Lanka) raised the question of the definition of the family, which varied considerably from one country to the next. While her delegation was of the view that the family was the nucleus of society, it believed that any social development strategy must be multifaceted and should be elaborated with all necessary precautions. With regard to literacy, she would like to see a clear definition of literacy and the criteria on which it was based.

39. **Mr. Hof** (Netherlands), referring to the impact of globalization on the implementation of the Plan of Action adopted at the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development, asked the Director of the Division for Social Policy and Development whether the best practices adopted by Governments to achieve the Copenhagen goals had already been identified. With reference to the criticisms addressed to the Commission for Social Development, which had been accused of neglecting the social dimension of globalization, he asked how the Commission could better incorporate globalization into its deliberations. He also wished to know how the follow-up of the implementation of the Copenhagen Plan of Action could be better integrated into the Organization's work on the Millennium Development Goals. Lastly, he said that there was a need to avoid compartmentalization of social and economic issues between the Second and Third Committees and asked how the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, the World Programme of Action for Youth and the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons could be better integrated into development policies and measures, which should make it possible to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

40. **Mr. Schölvinck** (Director of the Division for Social Policy and Development), replying to the delegation of the Netherlands, said that it was incumbent upon Member States to follow up the implementation of the Copenhagen Plan of Action. Referring to two goals set out in that plan — employment and social integration — he said that they should be linked to the Millennium Development Goals, and that poverty data should be broken down into different population categories (youth, elderly persons, persons with disabilities). Lastly, he hoped that the Commission's report would contribute to a better integration of economic and social policies, which would lead to better management of globalization and its impact. As to best practices, he was waiting to hear from Member States.

41. **Ms. Launay** (Director, UNESCO Office at the United Nations), replying to the Sri Lankan delegation, said there was no definition of literacy that was accepted by everyone. Overall, she believed that literacy consisted of receiving a basic education that would enable a person to read and do arithmetic, regardless of whether that person was a girl or a boy. Specifically, it meant having the ability to cope with daily life, whether one was an adult or a child.

42. **Mr. Al-Sulaiti** (Qatar), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the commitments made by heads of State and Government at the Copenhagen Summit and the twenty-fourth special

session of the General Assembly had been the cornerstone of a new consensus to place people at the centre of development policies. Nevertheless, the efforts made to date did not fulfil the spirit of the texts adopted on those occasions; vast sectors of society, particularly in the developing and least developed countries, were still in a dire situation.

43. Noting that there was still a gap between intentions and actions at the level of national and international policies, he called for a new partnership between developed and developing countries, and urged the former to make concrete efforts to achieve the target of providing 0.7 per cent of their gross national product as official development assistance to developing countries and from 0.15 to 0.20 per cent to least developed countries.

44. Pointing to the support which the Group of 77 and China provided to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), he called on the developed countries and all Member States to emulate them. The countries he represented were completely convinced that while social development was above all a national responsibility, it could not be achieved without the collective commitment of the international community, within the framework of full respect for national sovereignty and cultural and religious diversity.

45. In looking forward to the 10-year review in 2005 of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development, he stressed the need to: assess fully the implementation of the 10 commitments adopted in 1995 and confirmed on several occasions thereafter, establish a genuine North-South dialogue, assess comprehensively the obstacles to development, and address the negative impact of globalization on economic and social development, particularly in developing countries and least developed countries.

46. Lastly, in view of the critical situation in which many older persons lived throughout the developing world, there was an urgent need to adopt a realistic approach in order to promote and protect their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights; the Group of 77 and China were fully prepared to assume their share of responsibility for the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action on Ageing with intensified cooperation from their development partners.

47. *Ms. Groux (Switzerland), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.*

48. **Mr. Hof** (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the candidate countries (Croatia, Romania and Turkey), the stabilization and association process countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), and the European Free Trade Association country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area, said that the European Union strongly supported the implementation of the commitments made at the Copenhagen Summit and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly; it was committed to the comprehensive implementation of the Millennium Declaration, including the development goals contained therein, and to the commitments agreed on in other United Nations conferences and summits. For that reason, the European Union welcomed the report entitled "A fair globalization — creating opportunities for all" by the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, established by the International Labour Organization; the emphasis in that report was on people-centred globalization, and particular attention was paid to poverty reduction, gender equality, employment, health, education, social security and social services, as well as people's aspiration for democratic participation and material prosperity.

49. Eradicating extreme poverty remained the major social challenge. National policies were the primary responsibility of Governments, but to be effectively implemented, national poverty-reduction strategies needed the active involvement of civil society and the private sector, and considerable support from the international community. That meant national and international resource mobilization combined with increased effectiveness and harmonization of development efforts, more coherence in national, external and development policies as well as the implementation of the Doha Development Agenda.

50. Conscious of the fact that higher employment rates were critical to achieving economic growth and furthering social inclusion and development, the European Union had set itself ambitious goals for the year 2010. The European Council had agreed to promote competitiveness, employment and social cohesion as mutually reinforcing objectives and policies. The European employment strategy and the European cooperation policy on social protection and social inclusion were aimed at promoting full employment, quality and productivity at work,

increased gender equality, social cohesion and an inclusive society. However, further efforts would be necessary because the economic outlook had become less favourable. The European employment strategy had been adapted to take into account the recommendations from the Employment Task Force, which had highlighted the importance of employability, adaptability, balance between flexibility and security, investment in human capital and better governance. Decent work and improved employment opportunities were needed to bring forth stability and a stronger global social cohesion. Given the degree of importance that all Member States attached to those issues, it would be helpful for them to share information on their experiences and those policies and programmes that had yielded positive results.

51. Having singled out migration as one of its policy priorities, the European Union welcomed the lead taken by the Secretary-General in fostering the debate within the Organization. It was firmly committed to securing a balance between the reception and integration of legal immigrants, on the one hand, and the urgent need to stop illegal migration and human trafficking, on the other. In order to foster a better migration policy, the European Union had initiated a new policy towards such neighbours as Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Croatia, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, as well as countries on Europe's southern Mediterranean periphery. It was awaiting with interest, the final report of the Global Commission on International Migration, which would, hopefully, enrich the substance of international debate on the issue of migration.

52. With regard to youth, five issues had emerged to join the 10 priorities defined in the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond: the impact of globalization on young women and men; the use of and access to information and communications technologies; the dramatic increase in HIV among young people and the impact of the epidemic on their lives; the active involvement of young people in armed conflict both as victims and as perpetrators; and the increased importance of addressing intergenerational issues in an ageing society. At its sixtieth session, the General Assembly would have to review, with the full and effective participation of the youth, the results achieved and the challenges remaining with regard to the World Programme of Action. The European Union welcomed the joint establishment by the International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Bank and the United Nations Secretariat, of the Youth Employment Network, which the Union was fully supporting.

53. It hoped that the negotiating process for an international inclusive convention on the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by persons with disabilities would continue with the participation of non-governmental organizations. The need to supplement the United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities had been clear for several years, and the European Union hoped that, at the next session of the Commission for Social Development, agreement could be reached on the proposed supplement.

54. The European Union attached great importance to the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing 2002 at the national, regional and local levels, and welcomed the road map for implementation presented in 2003 by the Secretariat.

55. The 2005 session of the Commission for Social Development would be particularly important, and every effort needed to be made to reach the agreed goals. The Commission should become a more action-oriented forum for sharing experiences and best practices. It should foster greater cooperation with the specialized agencies, including ILO, or with initiatives with particular relevance to social development such as the Global Compact. Rather than negotiating agreed conclusions, it should contribute to improving the world social situation and promoting social development. In short, it should be revitalized.

56. **Mr. Zhang** Yishan (China) said that in spite of the efforts that Member States and the Organization had made over the past 10 years to implement the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action and in spite of the many successes scored, much more remained to be done to achieve the goals set by the World Summit for Social Development and the Millennium Summit, since disease, poverty and unemployment still plagued many developing countries. China, therefore, welcomed the reports submitted by the Secretary-General (A/59/120) and the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization.

57. China, indeed, believed that beyond its positive impact on national well-being, coordinated and balanced social development also contributed to the

maintenance of peace and security. First, it was important for the international community, assisted by all countries, to redouble its efforts to build at the national and international levels, the peace and stability which alone could promote development and eradicate poverty. Second, a world economic order must be established which made for balanced global development and removed the adverse consequences of globalization. Third, developed countries needed to give developing countries a helping hand by honouring their commitments, cancelling debt, speeding up technology transfer and eschewing protectionist trade practices. Fourth, developed and developing countries should seek ways of addressing the contradiction between productivity gains and job creation, and should institute effective social security systems to help vulnerable groups. Fifth, United Nations agencies must assume increased responsibilities for social development, particularly by seeking out best country practices, promoting joint North-South activities and fighting poverty, unemployment and disease.

58. For its part, China was working to eradicate poverty and to create a system of full employment and social security that met national needs. As a matter of fact, the number of rural Chinese living in abject poverty had declined from 80 million in 1993 to 29 million in 2003. By late 2003, more than 256 million Chinese had become urban workers and the unemployment rate had fallen to 4.3 per cent. China was determined to set the interests of its people as a top priority and to spare no effort to reduce poverty and to pursue national development in peace.

59. **Mr. Meyer** (Brazil), speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, said that the main advantage of the World Summit for Social Development was the attention it had drawn to the human factor. It had been widely acknowledged that while globalization held great prospects for development, it often deepened poverty and inequality. To address those problems, multilateralism must be strengthened, coherent and inclusive strategies formulated and more efficient, transparent and democratic multilateral regimes instituted, with the highest degree of urgency, to counter the injustices imposed by globalization.

60. In the final declaration of their meeting held in New York on 20 September 2004, political leaders the world over had affirmed that persistent hunger and extreme poverty were economically irrational, politically unacceptable and morally shameful, and had tried to muster the political clout to combat those evils. To address the problem as it impinged on the individual, the activities conducted at the international and country levels must be complementary. A free and equitable multilateral trading system must be instituted to create the jobs and wealth that would enable developing countries to progress. Stable and secure inflows of economic, financial and official development assistance resources would also be indispensable. At the country level, it was increasingly being acknowledged that the social impact of macroeconomic policies should be evaluated and that investment in social programmes increased economic productivity. The Rio Group was also of the opinion that democracy and administrative transparency were essential for achieving sustainable development.

61. It noted with concern, however, that certain restrictions prevented Governments from instituting social policies. The international financing system should be reformed because it lacked adequate machinery for preventing and managing international financial crises. The limitations imposed by measures to improve the state of public finances did not allow for infrastructural investments, which happened to be of crucial importance to national economic dynamism. For that reason, the funding agencies could not disburse needed financial resources and the Inter-American Development Bank, for example, had utilized only 30 per cent of its budget in 2003. The Rio Group felt, therefore, that innovative financing mechanisms should be created to cater for public investment without compromising the viability of national public finances.

62. It was convinced that, in spite of all the difficulties, progress in social development could be made by unleashing the required energy and creativity without ever allowing development strategies and policies to lose their human focus.

63. **Ms. Joseph** (Saint Lucia), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and having thanked the representative of Qatar for the statement he had made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, recalled that, as stated in the *Report on the World Social Situation* (A/58/153/Rev.1-ST/ESA/284), 1.3 billion people lived in absolute poverty. In his report on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration (A/59/282), the Secretary-General had made it clear that developing and developed countries alike must honour their commitments under the

Declaration. Developed countries should increase their development assistance, grant debt relief and transfer technology, while developing countries mobilized counterpart resources and reformed their institutions. In paragraph 80, the Secretary-General had also mentioned the terrible consequences of disasters which continued to fall disproportionately on the shoulders of the world's poor, and the spate of hurricanes which had battered the Caribbean recently had been illustrative. In that regard, CARICOM underscored the importance of the work of two conferences planned for January 2005: the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States in Mauritius and the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Japan. Both would be highlighting the increasing vulnerability of small island developing States to external shocks and the devastating effect of natural disasters on their socio-economic development.

64. With regard to agenda item 93, CARICOM commended the work done by the Commission for Social Development in conducting a comprehensive review of the three issues of eradicating poverty, providing full productive employment and enhancing social inclusion, and welcomed the idea of intensifying the interaction between the Commission and the Economic and Social Council.

65. What was more, the mandates contained in the Millennium Declaration, the Durban Declaration, the Monterrey Consensus and the Johannesburg Declaration, together with their accompanying programmes of action, should serve as essential road maps for the implementation of the Copenhagen Consensus.

66. At the regional level, the CARICOM Council for Human and Social Development was redoubling its advocacy to impress upon all partners the complementarity of the economic and social dimensions of development. At the Council's latest meeting, held in October 2003, member Governments had focused on the importance of human resource retraining and reorganization.

67. With help from the Government of the Netherlands, the Caribbean regional head office of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) had set up a social statistics database which could help Caribbean Governments in social policy formulation. Using the data, analytical tools and training provided, they would be able to establish a social vulnerability index.

68. With regard to the youth, 5 new areas of concern had emerged to join the 10 highlighted by the Secretary-General in his 2003 World Youth Report (A/58/79): the impact of globalization, the impact of information and communications technologies, HIV/AIDS, youth and conflict prevention and intergenerational relationships. A multisectoral approach would be required to achieve the set objectives. CARICOM welcomed the creation of the Youth Employment Network with assistance from the United Nations, the World Bank and ILO, and endorsed the recommendations of the high-level Network Group, which laid special emphasis on employability through investment in education, and on gender equity.

69. Since two thirds of people in the region were less than 30 years old, the Caribbean countries had taken a number of measures within the context of youth development and promotion, more specifically by creating an inter-agency coordinating mechanism which, through the pooling of various resources, was aimed at reducing the HIV/AIDS rate among young people. CARICOM had also launched a Caribbean youth ambassadors programme to elicit youth participation, to develop their leadership capabilities, to enable young people to communicate their views to policy makers and to encourage them to interact with other young people in the region.

70. CARICOM welcomed the report which the Caribbean regional head office of ECLAC had prepared in 2004 on youth and unemployment, analysing the nature and impact of youth unemployment, and proposing solutions that used information technologies to address the problem.

71. On the issue of ageing, she referred to the 2003 *Report on the World Social Situation*, which highlighted several areas of particular interest to the elderly, and specifically commended for their work within the context of the Second World Assembly on Ageing, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (which had addressed the issue of elderly women) and the Commission on the Status of Women. The Division for Social Policy and Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) deserved particular commendation for drafting a technical assistance

programme for the country execution of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. ECLAC was providing technical assistance to countries in the formulation of national policy for the elderly, and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) was to be congratulated on the constant attention it focused on the plight of elderly persons living in poverty.

72. At the regional level, statistics showed an increase in the population over the age of 65. In 1998, CARICOM had accordingly adopted the Caribbean Charter on Health and Ageing. In December 2003, the Caribbean regional head office of ECLAC had published a report giving a demographic analysis of the ageing process in the Caribbean. In addition, a seminar on ageing was planned for November 2004.

73. Regarding the disabled, the Special Rapporteur of the Commission for Social Development studying the situation of the disabled had indicated that, over the past 10 years, human rights advocacy had focused on disability. It was encouraging to note that the Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities were becoming the point of reference for inclusive national policy formulation and for the implementation of programmes benefiting the disabled. CARICOM supported the proposed supplement, which would cover training, violence and ill-treatment as well as health and medical care. She commended the efforts made by the Working Group drafting an international convention on the rights of the disabled, and welcomed the work being done by the Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities. CARICOM would continue to insist on measures to address the excessive degree of joblessness among the disabled, to eliminate discrimination and to promote equal opportunities for them.

74. With regard to the family, CARICOM reaffirmed the importance of the many initiatives that the international community had taken to strengthen the family, welcomed the publication by DESA of the study entitled "Major Trends Affecting Families" and took note, in that respect, of the Secretary-General's report on preparations for and observance of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2004 (A/59/176).

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.

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Summary record of the 2nd meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 4 October 2004, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Kuchinsky .... (Ukraine)
later: Ms. Groux (Vice-Chairman) .... (Switzerland)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 93: Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (*continued*) (A/59/115 and 120)

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(a) **Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family** (*continued*) (A/59/176)

(b) **United Nations Literacy Decade: education for all** (*continued*) (A/59/76 and Add.1 and Corr.1 and A/59/267)

Agenda item 95: Follow-up to the International Decade of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing (*continued*) (A/59/164)

1. **Mr. Ocampo** (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs), introducing the items, said that the Commission for Social Development, as the primary intergovernmental body responsible for the follow-up and review of the implementation of the World Summit for Social Development, would conduct an important review of the implementation of the outcomes of the Summit and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly.

2. The realization of a people-centred approach to development was predicated not only on better living conditions and civic participation in the public policies designed to achieve that improvement, but also on poverty eradication, the attainment of full employment and enhanced social integration. In addition, that approach called for closer integration of economic and social policies, yet the incorporation of social goals in macroeconomic and general economic policies was far from a priority on national and international agendas, despite the fact that progress towards social goals depended on supportive and coherent economic policies at both levels. The Social Summit and the special session had underscored that national and international public agencies should always keep social and economic goals in mind when elaborating and implementing their policies.

3. While it had become clear that sustained and broad-based economic growth was critical to poverty reduction, other fundamental aspects of development must be borne in mind when formulating policy, if the causes of poverty were to be addressed. Without innovative conceptual and operational frameworks ensuring the balanced integration of economic and social policies, political commitment was unlikely to translate into integrated policy approaches. Concerns about the impact of globalization were central to such integration, since globalization could offer new opportunities for sustained economic growth, but it could likewise pose threats to human well-being. Although, in 2000, Governments had acknowledged that urgent action was required in order to realize the full potential of opportunities to benefit all, globalization was surrounded by growing controversy, and security issues currently loomed large on the international agenda. Intergovernmental attention should therefore focus as a matter of priority on the report entitled "A fair globalization: creating opportunities for all" issued by the International Labour Organization (ILO) World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization (A/59/98-E/2004/79).

4. Even though it was widely accepted that the primary responsibility for social development lay with countries and States, the exercise of that responsibility was being hampered by many countries' weak institutional and administrative capacity to design, implement and monitor social policies and programmes and by the loss of national policy-making autonomy as public authorities became part of a globalized and interdependent world economy. At the same time, heavier fiscal and political constraints on Governments had resulted in a reduction in State programmes and activities. Social development therefore required systematic efforts at all levels of policy-making to place people at the centre of public strategies and actions. Such an approach was a condition for progress towards the goals contained in the Millennium Declaration. The social aspects of globalization, the contribution of economic policies to social-development goals and the capacity of Governments to define and implement their own social policies were related problems of crucial relevance to the search for

equity and to poverty reduction and, as such, they deserved particular attention in the review.

5. With regard to the question of persons with disabilities, the goal of providing all social groups with the opportunity to contribute to society was linked to the people-centred approach and constituted one of the cornerstones of social integration and socially inclusive development. For more than two decades the United Nations had been at the forefront of promoting the equality of persons with disabilities and their full participation in the social, economic and political life of their countries. Nevertheless much more still needed to be done to remove barriers to social equity at national and international levels if the social protection of people with disabilities was to be enhanced, since that group of people continued to suffer from discrimination and lower standards of living. Significant progress had, however, been made towards that objective since the decision had been taken to draw up an international convention on the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities and, in that context, consideration should also be given to devising innovative policy instruments that would contribute to the successful implementation of the convention.

6. The wide-ranging implications of population ageing for economic, social and political development meant that a well-thought-out policy response geared to enhancing the participation of older people in the development process was clearly needed. The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing provided the framework for national and international efforts and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs was striving to provide technical assistance to support national capacity-building and the mainstreaming of ageing into policy formulation. Experience from many countries suggested that it was not easy to achieve social equity or to integrate the disadvantaged into society, although both objectives were crucial to greater empowerment, more social solidarity and closer social cohesion, all of which formed the underpinnings for successful economic outcomes that would in turn reinforce the virtuous circle of development.

7. The tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family was an occasion for recalling the importance of the original principles and objectives of the Year and for evaluating achievements, one of the most far-reaching of which was the creation of a greater awareness of what families contributed to economic development and social advancement in societies all over the world. Progress had also been secured through Member States' programmes of action through which efforts were being made to integrate family perspectives into national legislation, policy formulation and programme development. A regional conference on the Family in Africa had been held in Benin in July 2004 with the active support of his department and another conference in Qatar was planned later in the same year. Research on issues concerning the family was informing and enriching policies and programmes, while collaboration across the United Nations system was promoting the emergence of a framework for global action. Civil society was mobilizing in support of families and there were signs that the well-being of families had become an important focus of all those concerned with national development and poverty eradication. It was, however, still essential to provide expertise and appropriate technical support on family issues and to continue advocacy of those issues. Of the three core issues identified by the World Summit for Social Development, namely poverty eradication, employment creation and social integration, the latter two were often left out of the current policy debate. The Third Committee therefore had special responsibility in securing their re-inclusion in the development discourse so as to ensure the implementation of the Copenhagen Commitments and the achievement of the development goals set forth in the Millennium Declaration.

8. **Mr. Lorenzo** (Dominican Republic) said that, while poverty reduction had been widely discussed over the previous two years, he wondered how social development could be promoted when corruption and a lack of transparency often made it impossible for civil society to participate in government decisions. He was also sceptical that growth could be spurred at a time when oil prices were soaring. He likewise wished to know how the Global Compact was mobilizing resources through partnership between civil society, the private sector and Governments.

9. **Mr. Hof** (Netherlands) asked for more information about ways of improving the integration of employment issues and social cohesion into the Millennium Development Goals in the run-up to the review summit. The European Union agreed that priority attention should be devoted to the report entitled "A fair globalization: creating opportunities for all" produced by the ILO World Commission on the

Social Dimension of Globalization, and he would therefore like to hear how greater attention could be paid to the report in the Third Committee and in the Commission for Social Development. Lastly he asked if the review of the Copenhagen Commitments and of the twenty-fourth special session would focus on the report.

10. **Mr. Ocampo** (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs) replied that poverty reduction did not depend on economic growth alone, but that income distribution was likewise a critical determinant. In many cases, growth had had a limited impact owing to rising inequality. On the other hand, major advances in poverty alleviation had always been associated with a broadly based process of economic growth and the Millennium Development Goals could not be achieved without it, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, where growth rates were below the requisite 6 to 7 per cent a year. Although economic growth did have a critical influence on income and employment, it did not always lead to poverty alleviation. The latter was, however, an economic issue and should therefore be at the centre of any agenda.

11. Turning to the question of oil prices, he said that, according to some estimates, an extra $10 per barrel would shave half to one percentage point off world economic growth in the coming two years. There was, however, no knowing whether the current increase would be permanent. The monetary policies traditionally adopted to counteract the inflation triggered by higher oil prices tended to depress economic activity. Part of the slowdown in the world economy noted in the second quarter of the current year was associated with oil prices, but the effect of monetary policies had yet to be felt and two major economic areas had not increased their interest rates. It was therefore to be hoped that the adverse effect of tighter monetary policies would not be too strong, although a number of other risks to the world economy were likely to lead to slower growth the following year, one being the jobless economic recovery which had taken place to date.

12. The ILO World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization had been right to place a strong emphasis on the role of employment in social progress. If strong economic growth was to have beneficial social effects, it would have to have a positive influence on employment. Hence there could be no rapid reduction in poverty without an improvement in the quantity and quality of employment. Although the Millennium Development Goals had not placed much emphasis on social integration, the forthcoming review of the outcome of the World Summit and the twenty-fourth special session would offer an excellent opportunity to reassert the central role that the three main objectives of Copenhagen played in fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals.

13. **Mr. Cumberbach Miguén** (Cuba) said that the distribution of wealth was of crucial importance for eradicating poverty, creating employment and social integration and analysing the social impact of globalization. He would therefore like to know what role the United Nations and other multilateral bodies should play in ensuring a better distribution of wealth worldwide that would further enhance social development nationally and internationally by levelling out disparities between different nations.

14. **Ms. Abeysekere** (Sri Lanka) enquired about the possibility of reconciling the effects of globalization with people-centred development. In her opinion, globalization was not a natural phenomenon but was directed by human decisions. The villagers in the global village were unequal. Did the United Nations see any way out of that dilemma? How could development be people-centred when all efforts at stemming the worst effects of globalization seemed to be futile?

15. **Mr. Ocampo** (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs) said that recent studies had demonstrated that the worsening trend in the distribution of wealth within countries was a widespread phenomenon in almost all the member States of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and in most developing countries, save for some notable exceptions in Africa. In contrast, trends in the exploitation of development potential had diverged widely over the previous 25 years, with some very poor countries forging ahead and other middle-income countries failing to do so. A comparison of both trends had fuelled a debate as to whether worldwide wealth distribution had really worsened, since India and China had offset that trend.

16. In response to the question about making development people-centred, he took the view that it was necessary to look at the openings offered by globalization. Some of the countries which had done

best economically had exploited those openings. For that reason, Governments' room for manoeuvre to adopt policies to manage the risks posed by globalization was critical, for globalization provided many opportunities in the shape of international trade, the management of migration flows, the use of technology developed elsewhere and the additional flows of capital that could be tapped on the international markets. The ILO World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization had therefore emphasized that the answer lay not so much in condemning globalization as in using it for social development.

17. **Ms. Bertrand** (Joint Inspection Unit) presented the main issues contained in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on achieving the universal-primary-education goal of the United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/59/76 and Add.1 and Corr.1). The purpose of the report was to complement the monitoring of the education Millennium Development Goals, namely to ensure that all boys and girls would be able to complete a full course of primary schooling and to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and to all levels by 2015.

18. The first issue was the underestimation of the importance of education, particularly primary education, and its value in attaining the Millennium Development Goals. Education needed to be given higher priority at the national and international levels. That required renewed political commitments, more domestic and external resources for education, reforms, increased official development assistance and better external assistance.

19. The second issue was better and increased cooperation of the United Nations organizations working in education, a division of labour based on comparative advantage, more sharing of and learning from best practices, joint evaluations with partner countries, and investing in institutional memory. The report described the strategies and activities of the main actors in education, in particular the United Nations system. The quality of cooperation and partnership among all actors — bilateral, multilateral, the United Nations system, the Bretton Woods institutions, partner countries and civil society — was essential and must be improved. There was therefore a need for better coordination within national development plans and poverty-reduction strategies.

20. The third issue was the integration of social policies, particularly education plans, into wider, national development plans and poverty-reduction strategies. The report recommended capacity-building at all levels and that United Nations organizations with recognized expertise in human development and social policy should increase their interaction with the Bretton Woods institutions, particularly in the elaboration of national development plans and poverty-reduction strategies. The United Nations instruments — the Common Country Assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework — must also be more closely interlinked with national plans.

21. The fourth issue was the need to increase knowledge about the quality of education, by investing in statistical capacity-building and helping Member States improve the quality of education through the assessment of learning outcomes. One of the main conclusions of the report was the lack of robust data on the status of education owing to weak statistical capacity in many developing countries. The estimated number of children out of school varied from 107 to 120 million, depending on the report concerned. However, if estimates included all the children "missing out on education" — in other words, children out of school, children who went to school but dropped out, children who went to school but did not complete, and children who completed but did not learn anything — the number would rise to 30 to 40 per cent of children of primary-school age in developing countries. It was a very important issue, given that those children would be the illiterate adults of tomorrow.

22. There were conflicting data on external assistance to education; the situation needed to be rectified, as it was essential to have comprehensive, comparable data. Regarding monitoring, the report recommended that the United Nations organizations should keep the governing bodies informed concerning their contribution to the Millennium Development Goals.

23. The sixth issue concerned monitoring of commitments and avoiding overloads. Many plans had failed because commitments had not been monitored properly; it was therefore very important to monitor progress, assess implementation and review strategies in order to avoid yet more failure. The report proposed that the Economic and Social Council should consider organizing, in 2006 or 2007, a review of the poverty-

reduction strategies of the United Nations system as part of the comprehensive review of the Millennium Declaration.

24. She urged the Committee to keep the report on the agenda both during the current session and during the 2005 review of the Millennium Declaration.

25. *Ms. Groux (Switzerland), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

26. **Mrs. Faye** (Senegal) asked what strategy would be used to achieve the two goals in developing countries, particularly in Africa, which African countries had seen improvements, and how the lack of data for developing countries would be tackled.

27. **Ms. Bertrand** (Joint Inspection Unit) said that Senegal was one of the countries best known for investing in education. The International Conference on Financing for Development held in Monterrey, Mexico, in 2002 had made it clear that, while primary responsibility for education rested with Governments, responsibility also lay with the international community. In 2000, the participants in the World Education Forum in Dakar had made a solemn pledge that no countries seriously committed to education for all would be thwarted in their achievement of that goal by a lack of resources. That had been interpreted as a commitment by the international donor community and by the United Nations system to help Governments in need with resources and technical assistance. One positive development was that the focus of the so-called Fast-Track Initiative of the World Bank had been broadened to encompass the education-for-all goals. Experience in developing countries showed that data collection was a formidable task; more resources were therefore needed for statistical capacity-building.

28. **Mr. Effah-Apenteng** (Ghana) said that the global social situation had deteriorated even further since the holding of the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, both of which would be reviewed in 2005. Despite unprecedented progress, there was still massive human deprivation. According to the *Human Development Report 2004*, over 800 million people were undernourished, more than a billion lived on less than $1 a day, and some 100 million children were out of school.

29. Global policies and programmes were not yielding the expected results of poverty eradication. His country therefore welcomed the report of the ILO World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, issued in February 2004 (see document A/59/120, para. 16), which examined the social failures of globalization and discussed how to address the imbalances of globalization and how to place people at the heart of that process. He hoped that the report would inspire Member States to honour their commitments.

30. Despite developing countries' determination to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, national development policies seemed to be failing owing to the unfavourable international economic environment and inadequate official development assistance and foreign direct investment. Most developing countries were therefore unable to achieve the 3 per cent economic growth required. The situation was aggravated by HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases which further eroded already limited resources.

31. His country therefore supported calls for a real transformation of the global economic environment and urged developed countries to sincerely commit themselves to the development principles reached at Doha by widening market access, providing more trade-related assistance and increasing development assistance and investments.

32. Despite the economic challenges at the international level, his country was determined to stay on course and was currently focusing on five priority areas: developing infrastructure, modernizing agriculture through rural development, improving social services, strengthening the private sector and strengthening institutions of good governance. Special attention was also being paid to the education sector. The ultimate national goal was eradication of poverty; however, his Government understood that poverty went beyond "lack of money" and was therefore addressing a whole range of issues. He was confident that his country was on course to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, but nonetheless called for ongoing international support.

33. His delegation welcomed United Nations system strategies aimed at implementing the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002. He stressed the importance of integrating ageing issues into national development plans and programmes, but warned that such efforts would be unsuccessful without the requisite capacity. He therefore called on Member

States to support the Department of Social and Economic Affairs' capacity-building programmes. He also noted that the regional action plan on ageing lacked the necessary implementation strategies; his country would support efforts to rectify the situation, as technical cooperation was crucial.

34. His delegation remained concerned about the deteriorating situation of the family, and therefore reiterated its support for international initiatives on the matter. The national, regional and international activities to mark the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family should be actively pursued to prevent further deterioration.

35. His delegation welcomed the fact that the Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities had commended negotiations on a convention. While acknowledging the importance of careful drafting, he urged all delegations to take the necessary steps to facilitate the process.

36. Lastly, he reaffirmed his Government's commitment to implementing the Copenhagen Programme of Action and attaining the Millennium Development Goals, but pointed out that, like many developing countries, his country relied on genuine partnerships and effective international cooperation.

37. **Ms. Erard** (Switzerland) said that the international community had made a commitment to placing people at the heart of social development. The commitments made in Copenhagen in 1995, reiterated in Geneva in 2000 and further reinforced by the Millennium Development Goals, were just as relevant in today's world where exclusion and poverty persisted.

38. Her country believed it was essential to ensure the protection and promotion of human rights and good governance, fair global growth, a favourable climate for investment and the creation of decent work based on market liberalization and fair rules. Such principles were crucial to reducing poverty and to promoting full and decent employment and social integration. A solidarity-based social policy was key to ensuring social cohesion and the participation of marginalized sectors of the population.

39. Her delegation welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit on Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (A/59/120) and his analysis of the work of the Commission for Social Development.

40. With regard to evaluating the social aspects of globalization, the Secretary-General's concerns largely corresponded with the conclusions of the report of the ILO World Commission. Her country proposed taking account of those conclusions when addressing his concerns.

41. With regard to ensuring the compatibility of macroeconomic policies with and their contribution to social development goals, her country endorsed in particular the proposal concerning the need to integrate the economic, social and environmental aspects to national and international development policies.

42. At the institutional level, such an approach required greater integration and more coherence between the economic and social policies practised by the United Nations and ILO, on the one hand, and by the international financial institutions and the World Trade Organization, on the other. Her country favoured such an approach.

43. At the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, her country had proposed a multilateral initiative between ILO, the Bretton Woods institutions, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and civil-society representatives. Her delegation continued to believe that such an initiative was important.

44. It was also important to ensure effective follow-up of social-development commitments within United Nations bodies. Her country had therefore called for an exchange of information between the various functional commissions in order to streamline work. Her delegation welcomed the meeting held in July 2004 and encouraged the chairmen of the functional commissions to step up such exchanges in the future.

45. With regard to strengthening the capacity of Governments to define and implement their own social policies, each State was responsible for implementing adequate social policies. Sustainable social development required conditions favourable to social dialogue, the introduction of balanced social-security systems and decent working conditions. It was therefore essential to continue the dialogue on corporate social responsibility.

46. **Mr. Tarp** (Denmark) said that significant progress had been made in the negotiations for a convention on the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities at the recent fourth session of the Ad Hoc Committee, but some core issues were still to be negotiated. His Government hoped that the Committee would recommend the continuation of the work of the Ad Hoc Committee for two sessions of two weeks each in 2005. The process leading to the conclusion of the convention would provide a strong focus on disability issues for Governments, and would be an opportunity to prepare national legislation and procedures for its implementation.

47. He urged all Member States to participate actively in the negotiations for the convention by appointing representatives of disabled persons' organizations to their delegations and by contributing to the Voluntary Fund for the Convention.

48. **Mr. Friis** (Denmark), speaking as a youth representative of his delegation, said that only a handful of nations had met the target of 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product for official development assistance, yet it was pivotal to live up to that responsibility in order to meet the Millennium Development Goals. An investment in children and young people, through investment in social infrastructure such as education and health care, would pay off by generating economic and social development.

49. The role of children and young people as a resource for society was often overlooked, along with their right to participate, which was emphasized in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Regional seminars for youth could make a useful contribution to the evaluation of progress towards the Millennium Development Goals to be conducted in 2005.

50. **Mr. Hayee** (Pakistan) said that the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (A/59/120) provided a grim reminder that the three core issues raised at the Summit — poverty eradication, job creation and strengthening of the social fabric — remained elusive. Nine years later, the situation of the 1 billion people living in abject poverty was largely the same. The enabling environment called for at the Summit had not been realized. His delegation agreed with the Secretary-General's recommendation that people must be placed at the centre of public strategies and actions. A strengthened North-South partnership was also necessary in order to achieve common goals. To that end, his Government had launched a five-year social-action programme, with the assistance of foreign donors, as a large-scale effort to improve the management and delivery of social services.

51. The family had been recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as the fundamental unit of society founded by a man and a woman of full age exercising their right to marry, and that concept had been embedded in all subsequent human rights instruments and covenants. Although the form of the family had been evolving, its definition had never changed, and those who wished to elevate other forms of union to the status of family were violating the provisions of the Declaration and the right of the family to comprehensive support and protection. His delegation would like to see the strengthening of the United Nations Programme on the Family within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in order to support the mainstreaming of the family in its work.

52. Pakistan attached great importance to the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, and had taken action to enhance social support for its elderly population. It was in the process of preparing its national report on implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, and had taken many steps on the path towards sustained growth and development.

53. **Ms. Haakestad** (Norway), speaking as a youth representative of her delegation, said that although slavery had been abolished, human beings were still being traded and exploited. Every day, women and children were sold and forced into a life where their bodies were used through prostitution or as a source of cheap labour. Trafficking in women and children must be fought by attacking its root causes: poverty, which deprived women of education for employment, and armed conflict, which allowed trafficking to thrive in the power vacuum that often arose in post-conflict situations. Trafficking also highlighted the fact that in many societies, equal opportunity for women was still just a dream.

54. Although the State had the primary responsibility to eradicate that scourge, international action was also called for. A first step was the universal ratification, without reservation, of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against

Women. Trafficking must also be fought through adequate financial and social support to victims, training for law enforcement, legal reform, information campaigns, assistance for repatriation and rehabilitation of trafficking victims, and combating sex tourism. The adoption in 2000 of a protocol against trafficking in persons had been an important step; it must be ratified and enforced, and cross-border law-enforcement cooperation must be enhanced.

55. Important contributions towards halting the trade in sexual services could be made at the national level as well. For example, Norway had introduced a code of conduct for government employees prohibiting the purchase of sexual services while on official business abroad. A similar code of conduct for military personnel serving in international operations had been adopted by NATO.

56. **Ms. Flore** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that education was one of the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Education opened the way to democracy, peace and development. Literacy enabled men and women to adapt to the modern world and assimilate the ideas that led to development.

57. In Côte d'Ivoire, over half of all adults were illiterate, of whom women represented two thirds. Accordingly, the Government was focusing on adult basic education as a means of reducing poverty and raising the standard of living through programmes designed to reach all vulnerable sectors of society. Women's education centres had been established to provide vocational training along with literacy. As illiteracy was highest in rural areas, the Institute of Applied Linguistics was working on the transcription of national languages with a view to their use in literacy programmes.

58. Although much remained to be done, her country had high hopes that literacy would become a useful development tool, despite the social and political situation which made access to some areas of the country difficult.

59. **Mr. Al-Khoshall** (Saudi Arabia) said that his Government was committed to social development through development plans in the areas of human resources, social-welfare programmes and vocational training for disabled persons. It had established social-development centres throughout the country in order to implement those programmes. Because of armed conflict and other developments in the region over the past two decades, the Government had invested significant resources in programmes to raise the standard of living of its citizens.

60. Unfortunately, advances in science and technology had not provided equal benefits to all the peoples in the world. In the view of his Government, adherence to religious values was the only way to achieve peace and security in society.

61. **Mr. Gospodinov** (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)) drew attention to the report the Secretary-General had made to the Commission for Social Development on public-sector effectiveness. As the Secretary-General had noted, the withdrawal of the public sector from many traditional fields of activity should be of special concern. An immediate result of that withdrawal was the worsening situation of the most vulnerable populations. Governments must understand the importance of building a strong relationship with their national Red Cross/Red Crescent societies, which were auxiliaries to the public authorities in the humanitarian field.

62. There had been a marked decline in resources allocated to social development in virtually all countries, but reductions in expenditure on education, for example, had hit hardest in the countries which could least afford it. The same was true for health care, welfare programmes and housing.

63. At the next session of the Commission, IFRC would stress the importance of the participation of affected groups in the development of national social strategies. One such example was the participation of youth in social development planning. Volunteers could also have a positive impact on many situations. For example, they were reaching out to young people in South Africa, where over 25 per cent of the population between ages 15 and 49 were living with HIV/AIDS, in an effort to improve prevention, knowledge and attitudes.

64. The elderly were also often neglected by State welfare and health services, and in Hong Kong, the Red Cross had engaged older people as volunteers to reach out to others in their age group. Youth and volunteer involvement were imperative for national growth, not to mention the Millennium Development Goals. Such collaboration should become a regular feature of the design and implementation of programmes.

65. IFRC saw social development as a set of issues that must be mainstreamed into other debates, which would become increasingly important as the expected decline in investment in the social sector continued.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.

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Summary record of the 3rd meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 5 October 2004, at 10 a.m.

Chairman : Mr. Kuchinsky .... (Ukraine)
later : Ms. Abdul Aziz (Vice-Chairperson) .... (Malaysia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 93: Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly *(continued)* (A/59/120 and A/59/115)

Agenda item 94: Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family *(continued)* (A/59/73)

(a) **Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family** (A/59/176)

(b) **United Nations Literacy Decade: education for all** (A/59/267)

Agenda item 95: Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing *(continued)* (A/59/164)

1. **Mr. Moeini** (Islamic Republic of Iran), having endorsed the statement made by Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that at the next session of the Commission for Social Development the international community should renew its commitment to the outcomes of the World Summit on Social Development held in Copenhagen and support the Commission in enforcing their implementation. Recognizing the valuable work of the Commission, the Islamic Republic of Iran encouraged the Commission to focus more on practical measures that could facilitate application at all levels by addressing the constraints that countries faced when it came to implementation rather than engaging in abstract and purely theoretical debates on social development issues. In that context, it was necessary to review the Commission's method of work with a view to strengthening the implementation of the outcomes of the Summit.

2. The Tenth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family offered the international community an opportunity to recall that the family, resulting from the union between man and woman, was the basic unit of the society. Family policies should enhance the stability of the family. The Islamic Republic of Iran concurred with many proposals contained in the Secretary-General's report and considered them conducive to strengthening that institution in all countries. One particular concern that could arise from the report related to the definition of the family. There was certainly no consensus among Member States on a single definition, but the Islamic Republic of Iran did not consider that to be a global problem requiring a departure from traditional United Nations practice. Moreover, the study referred to in the Secretary-General's report contained terms and statements that were historically and factually incorrect and, therefore, it could not be regarded as a reliable source.

3. The Islamic Republic of Iran recognized the importance of the proposed Supplement to the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities. However, those proposals should not pose a further burden, over and above international agreements and norms, on countries that had been serving a huge population of refugees over a long period of time. Furthermore, the Standard Rules should highlight the situation of disabled persons in emergency situations, disability resulting from natural disasters and the role of science and technology in preventing disability. Last but not least, among the various groups of disabled persons, attention should be paid to the persons disabled as a result of contamination by chemical substances.

4. The Islamic Republic of Iran welcomed the extensive participation of various actors in the Third and Fourth Sessions of the Ad Hoc Committee on a comprehensive and integral international convention to promote and protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities, but was not entirely comfortable with the speed of the work and with some controversial proposals which could delay finalization of the text of the convention. It was crucial to avoid proposing controversial ideas that had proved unproductive in similar negotiations and to ensure that the convention led to effective international cooperation on ways to exchange information, scientific findings, technology and resources in order to take into account the development perspective of disability.

5. **Ms. Nguyen** (Australia), speaking under agenda item 94 and as the Australian youth representative, pointed out that, in areas of Australia where young

people were not taken into consideration as social and cultural contributors to their community, the rates of juvenile crime and detention were higher. Compared to earlier generations, young Australians were currently confronted with an overwhelming level of information and complexity. They were often under pressure to make immediate choices, although many had not yet developed the requisite emotional resources. The issues that they faced, however, varied among the various population sections. For many young indigenous Australians, the rates of retention at school remained very low, incarceration rates for young males were much higher than the national average and unemployment was a significant issue. Most youths in that group did not own a computer, although some organizations aimed to reduce the digital divide by creating online communities throughout Australia and educating and connecting young indigenous people. Youths that were marginalized - for whatever reason - were confronted with issues of identity and perception. Never before had the need for community engagement and development been so paramount.

6. Many organizations desired the participation and contribution of young people. However, the methods and language of engagement were often disempowering and resulted in a barrier to effective participation. Young people possessed a plethora of valuable qualities but ensuring their participation was difficult. Investment in infrastructure would make participation meaningful. One of the best ways for young people to participate was community cultural development. Australia was a leader in that practice, and mention should be made of the Foundation for Young Australians, which embraced the principle that, in the new millennium, young people had the capacity and the intelligence to determine what was best for them, provided them with study grants and involved them in decision-making.

7. Although many youth representatives had for several decades addressed the Third Committee and urged its members to include youth representatives in the delegations, the number of total youth representatives to the General Assembly was still smaller than ten. It was essential that all Member States should send a youth delegate to the General Assembly.

8. **The Chairman**, responding to the Australian representative's call, observed that the staff of the Ukrainian Mission to the United Nations comprised 16 civil servants, including two women, aged 27 on average. There were therefore delegations that specifically tried to promote the participation of young people.

9. **Mr. Siv** (United States of America), speaking under agenda item 24, drew special attention to literacy and education, ageing and the family and stated that those issues were linked. A strong family supported both its children and its ageing members to achieve and maintain their independence. Literate children grew into capable adults.

10. The United States supported the United Nations Literacy Decade, and were pleased that First Lady Laura Bush had been designated Honorary Ambassador for the Decade. The United States ensured that every child in America received a solid education. The majority of its young people continued their education after high school, and all persons had equal access to higher education, irrespective of gender, race, religion or ethnicity. Access to higher education continued to be promoted as the number and size of community colleges increased. Various education systems, with options to suit every child, provided more opportunities today for the society of tomorrow.

11. At the international level, the United States worked to create adequate opportunities for children to grow up and learn in a secure environment. A long-standing supporter of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United States had, in the previous year alone, given UNICEF $270 million. The United States participated in two major initiatives that sought to eradicate polio and to promote other child-survival partnerships. Over the past 50 years, United States children had collected $123 million through their own fund-raising efforts. That money helped UNICEF to carry out important work such as HIV/AIDS prevention, immunizations and girls' education. The United States' partnership with UNDP was likewise solid and long-standing, and the United States contribution of $190 million in 2003 was a sign of firm support for the programme.

12. The United States continued its efforts to implement the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. The goal was to work at both local and federal levels to provide elderly people with tools and programmes that would enable them to lead their lives as they chose. Poverty rates among the elderly had

declined significantly in the United States, and the Federal Government had recently created a new programme to make prescription drugs more affordable.

13. The United States delegation was pleased to hear that a new focal point on the family had been appointed in the Social Policy Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), and was looking forward to the General Assembly debate and other events planned for December 6 to discuss that vital issue in greater detail.

14. **Mr. Cumberbatch Miguén** (Cuba), having endorsed the statement made by Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, observed that, almost ten years after the World Summit for Social Development, the world situation was, for most societies, more precarious and unstable than ever. For a while, it had seemed that the commitments made in Copenhagen would be implemented and that an end would be put to extreme poverty, which currently affected 1.2 billion people, but, looking at the current conditions, it was appropriate to thoroughly review the texts adopted in 1995 and five years later, at the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly. The next session of the Commission for Social Development was an ideal opportunity to address that issue, proceed with a serious evaluation and adopt recommendations concerning the ten commitments made in Copenhagen, taking into account the new difficulties encountered by developing countries as a result of inadequate funds and of the unfair and unsustainable conditions brought about by the new global economic order. As a result of the current distribution of wealth, 20 percent of the population of the developed countries consumed 86 percent of total production, while the remaining 80 percent of the population lived in growing poverty. About 800 million persons suffered from hunger, more than 115 million children were not enrolled in school and 876 million persons were illiterate. Although most of those problems affected mainly the Third World, such inequalities also beset the societies of the wealthiest countries, where pockets of poverty and equally outrageous situations were not infrequent.

15. Promoting social development at the international level presupposed full implementation of the commitments made in Copenhagen and at other major United Nations conferences. Developing countries should no longer be asked to spend less on health, education, culture and social protection. Cuba considered that international cooperation, essential for improving the living conditions of the population, should be based on many criteria, address directly the social groups that needed it, suit the programmes and priorities of beneficiary countries and respect local traditions and cultures, in accordance with the 1995 statements. Cooperation would remain ineffective, if the developed countries did not fulfil their commitment to devote 0.7 percent of their gross national revenue (GNP) to official development assistance (ODA) and if the developing countries' external debt were not written off. In 2003, developed countries had paid more than US$68 billion in ODA but received US$436 billion in the form of debt servicing. The figures spoke for themselves.

16. Cuba had managed to implement social development strategies based on the principles of social equality and justice. A number of initiatives had succeeded in improving progressively social development policy, whose main beneficiaries had been children, young people, the disabled and older people. Those results had been achieved despite the 40-year old embargo imposed by the United States and reinforced through new measures - announced by that country's Government on 6 May 2004 and put into effect on 30 June 2004 - against Cuba's health and education systems, the Cuban people's right to food and the promotion of cultural development in the country.

17. Moreover, during preparations to celebrate the Tenth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family, obscure electoral considerations had prompted a new attack on the Cuban family. President Bush's administration, obsessed with setting back the Cuban revolution, had assumed the right to revise the definition of a Cuban family, limiting it to "grandparents, grandchildren, parents, brothers and sisters, spouses and children". In other words, no uncle, aunt or other relative would any longer be part of Cuban families living in the United States. Under the new restrictions, only the family members designated by the United States Government could receive remittances, while Cubans living in the United States who sent money, medicines or any other articles to an uncle, an Aunt, a cousin, any other relative or a friend could be prosecuted.

18. The Programme for Action of the World Summit for Social development adopted in 1995 affirmed that the family was "the basic unit of society and as such

should be strengthened " and that "in different cultural, political and social systems, various forms of the family exist[ed]". In the new attack against Cuba, the representatives of the United States Government had tried to deprive Cuban families of their identity by denying that they included relatives who traditionally were part of that basic unit of the Cuban people. Despite all that aggression, the results of Cuban social protection programmes were eloquent. The Cuban population as a whole had access to the health services, the rate of infant mortality had been reduced to 6 per 1,000 live births, all children were vaccinated against a dozen of avoidable illnesses, more than 95 percent of the territory was serviced by the power network and 80 percent of the rural population had access to drinking water.

19. It was essential to reaffirm - in connection with the Tenth Anniversary of the World Summit for Social Development - that the only way of achieving fair and equitable development for all consisted in changing an international order whereby a minority held the largest share of wealth, while every day the majority of the planet's population had to fight poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy and social exclusion.

20. **Mr. Gzllal** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), after endorsing the statement made by Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, noted that, although the situation regarding social development was in some ways very promising, much remained to be done. Efforts at the international level should be redoubled. In fact, some of the recommendations made - particularly in the areas of poverty, disease, foreign occupation, the negative impact of globalization and technology transfer - had not been heeded. The political will and the funds necessary to improve living conditions were lacking; and it should be borne in mind that precarious economic conditions could help to destabilize some countries and marginalize entire societies.

21. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya welcomed the special attention paid by the United Nations to Africa, but the international community should help the continent by paying fair prices for the commodities and raw materials that it produced; enabling it to combat such scourges as tuberculosis and malaria, raise the population's educational standard and combat external monopolies; meeting its commitments; and ensuring that globalization became more equitable and developing countries were integrated into the world economy.

22. Dialogue was the right option, ethnic conflicts should end and full advantage should be taken of information and communication technologies (ICTs) because the dissemination of knowledge was an essential element of sustainable development.

23. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya gave high priority to human resources development and was fully attentive to the disabled, the young and the elderly in total conformity with Islamic culture.

24. **Mr. Osmane** (Algeria), speaking under agenda items 93 and 94, said that his delegation endorsed the statement made by Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. He underscored that the principles established in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development were more pertinent than ever and that it was necessary - as mentioned in the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly - to better understand and manage the social impact of globalization, gear national and international macroeconomic policies to achieving social goals and build the capacities of governments to enable them to implement their own social policies. In that regard, Algeria endorsed - and had already partially implemented - the recommendations of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalisation. Algeria had set up an integrated social development system based on governance and the principles of social justice and national solidarity and geared to combating simultaneously unemployment and poverty. Two elements of that system were an inter-sector unit for studying national employment strategy options and a monitoring unit for protecting and promoting employment. The 2005 budget act provided for the establishment of a fund to support investment for employment, and for the extension of microenterprise creation incentives to unemployed persons aged 35 to 50. Moreover, 25 percent of the operational budget concerned education and training and more than 20 percent went to national solidarity, retirement and other pensions, youth and sport. Lastly, the infrastructure budget had increased by 15 percent and showed the Government's resolve to ensure that the country closed gaps in its development and to support economic growth, as a source of wealth and social well-being.

25. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) was an important initiative. Developing countries often lacked the means to implement their social policies, and it was therefore essential that the international community should help them to meet their commitments. Social development implied interdependence, an aspect that deserved thorough study in the framework of the Tenth Anniversary of the World Summit for Social Development and the review of progress toward the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

26. **Ms. Tejima** (Japan) said that the Heads of Government who had gathered in Copenhagen in 1995 had recognized that people should be placed at the centre of public policies and development strategies, and Japan fully shared the importance of people-centred approach and believed that it contributed to international peace and security. However, the international community was still a long way from arriving at concrete and efficient means of implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development, and the related ten-year review scheduled in February 2005 should be substantive and proactive.

27. Regarding older people, Japan was taking specific measures consistent with the priorities of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. The introduction of a system of continuous employment up to the age of 65 was promoted, and new grants were offered to companies that provided exercise courses to prevent a decline in physical ability with age and to enable older people to live independently as long as possible. Grants were also made available to nursing homes for appropriate staff training, and measures were taken to ensure the safety of older pedestrians. Japan's life expectancy was the highest in the world for both men and women and necessitated reforming the pension and medical care systems to meet the growing needs. In that regard, Japan looked forward to the publication, in 2005, of the study carried out by the International Longevity Centre.

28. Regarding persons with disabilities, Japan was actively participating in the negotiations of the Ad Hoc Committee on a comprehensive and integral international convention to promote and protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. At the national level, the Basic Law for Persons with Disabilities had been recently revised to include an article on the prohibition of discrimination against persons with disabilities and to provide for greater involvement of people with disabilities in policy-making. The Japanese Government cooperated with national non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which were very active in that area.

29. Concerning literacy, the National Federation of UNESCO Associations in Japan had initiated a unique international cooperative programme providing out-of-school children and illiterate adults in developing countries with the opportunity to study. It had served 715,000 learners at a cost of approximately US$12 million. Japan was aware of the many challenges faced by the United Nations Literacy Decade: education for all, and would continue to cooperate with the international community on that fundamental issue.

30. **Ms. Kang** (Republic of Korea) stressed that, as the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (A/59/120) indicated, many challenges still remained in relation to all three core issues identified at the World Summit for Social Development, namely poverty eradication, achievement of full and productive employment, and enhancement of social integration. The Republic of Korea commended the efforts of the Commission for Social Development and had high expectations that the forty-third session of the Commission would be an occasion for governments to redouble their resolve to attain the goals that had been set. Although there was no "one size fits all" when it came to social development, no single universal path, the Republic of Korea concurred with the Secretary-General's report that the promotion of dynamic, open and free markets must be combined with public intervention to prevent or counteract market failure, while expenditures on social programmes could actually be productive for both the economy and society. In that regard, the Republic of Korea appreciated the work of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization.

31. The Republic of Korea firmly believed that literacy and education to promote literacy were among the most important tools for social development, and thus had been sponsoring the King Sejong Literacy Prize of UNESCO since 1989, commended the initiatives launched by UNESCO, supported the recommendations presented in the Secretary-General's note on the implementation of the international plan of action for the United Nations Literacy Decade

(A/59/267), and encouraged a more integrated approach to literacy and education.

32. The Republic of Korea would study carefully the recommendation, contained in the Secretary-General's report on the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family (A/59/176), concerning the establishment of a national coordinating mechanism to review and propose legislation that affected families.

33. The Republic of Korea supported the Secretary-General's call, contained in his report on the Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing (A/59/164), for additional capacity-building aimed at promoting and facilitating the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and welcomed the ongoing efforts of various United Nations funds, programmes and agencies on that theme. In the Republic of Korea, the division in charge of the elderly population at the Ministry of Health and Welfare had been restructured in order to better implement the Madrid Plan. A presidential committee on ageing and future society had been established, and the Government was drafting a Basic Act on Ageing Society. Firmly committed to the principles of social development and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Republic of Korea was deploying efforts to ensure the equality of all citizens and the protection of the elderly.

34. *Ms. Abdul Aziz (Malaysia), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.*

35. **Mr. Jenie** (Indonesia), speaking under agenda items 93 and 94, endorsed the statement made by Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. He said it was painful that current progress in achieving the main goals of the Summit continues was characterized by a gap between proclaimed objectives and the actual orientation of national and international policies and believed that - as the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (A/59/120) indicated - the causes of that gap were related to three factors: the social aspects of globalization; macroeconomic policies and social development goals; and the capacity of national Governments to undertake social policies. The report had further found that so far the Commission for Social Development had not contributed sufficiently to better understanding and management of social development in the context of globalization. That exacerbated the marginalization of developing countries in the process. They could reap the benefits of globalization only if they were able to participate in globalization effectively. In the current globalized and interdependent world economy, public authorities in developing countries were in fact losing some of their policy-making autonomy and that undermined their capacity to undertake social policies, which was one of their primary responsibilities. In that connection, partnership initiatives such as those generated for the implementation of Agenda 21 could provide a model for advancing social development.

36. Indonesia was making progress on social development efforts at various levels. The Indonesian Parliament had just adopted the Law on the Social Security System. The law ensured that all Indonesians would be protected against social risks and that their basic needs would be properly met.

37. Indonesia paid particular attention to youth as an essential element for national development and, in cooperation with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) of the United Nations, had recently organized a Regional Workshop on "Youth in Poverty in Southeast Asia". At the national level, the Indonesia Youth Employment Network had been launched on 12 August 2004 as part of the observance of the International Youth Day.

38. Regarding the issue of ageing, Indonesia was fully committed to the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and the Macao Plan of Action on Ageing for Asia and the Pacific. Government measures that addressed the issue of elderly persons included Law No. 13/1998 on the Welfare of Older Persons and the establishment of a National Commission on Ageing, whose main tasks were to coordinate the implementation of national policies and programmes and to make relevant recommendations to the President.

39. Indonesia attached great importance to the family as the basic unit of society and, accordingly, promoted family empowerment programmes emphasizing the fulfilment of basic needs and access to information and economic resources.

40. **Mr. Nikiforov** (Russian Federation) said that the Forty-third Session of the Commission for Social Development and the Sixtieth Session of the General Assembly in 2005 would be opportunities to draw up an assessment of progress achieved toward the

attainment of the goals set at the World Summit for Social Development and of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to revitalize the social development programme. Development gaps between countries favoured armed conflicts and terrorism. It was therefore essential to prepare for the new challenges of globalization with a view to overcoming its negative consequences, particularly by building on the recommendations of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization. The high-level meeting held on 20 September 2004 had given new impulse to the fight against hunger and poverty, even though the various forms that the contribution of States would take had yet to be determined.

41. The Russian Federation had achieved significant progress at the economic and social level: gross domestic product (GDP) was growing steadily, the family revenue rate of increase was higher than inflation, the number of persons living under the poverty line had decreased by one third in four years and a federal law profoundly reforming the social protection system had been enacted in 2004. Moreover, the Russian Federation planned to introduce market mechanisms in the areas of education, housing and health.

42. Regarding the disabled, the Russian Government supported the Ad Hoc Committee on a comprehensive and integral international convention to promote and protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities in its important task and believed that the committee should not be prompted to speed up its work, if the quality of the draft convention were to suffer as a result. At the end of 2004, the Federation of Russia would establish a national body responsible for aligning national law with the provisions of the convention.

43. Referring to the recent tragic events, the representative of the Russian Federation stressed that terrorist attacks aimed at slowing down the country's progress were doomed to failure.

44. **Mr. Chowdhury** (Bangladesh) said that his delegation endorsed the statement made by Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. He said that attaining internationally agreed development goals, particularly those that had been set in the Millennium Declaration and at the World Summit for Social Development, demanded a new partnership between developed and developing countries. Regarding the objectives of the United Nations Literacy Decade, the time had come for action, in the form of more focused attention and increased resources.

45. Bangladesh viewed social development as critically important, played an active role in the Commission for Social Development and had demonstrated its commitment when it had chaired the forty-first session of that body in 2003.

46. Although domestic social development was basically a national responsibility, governments could not fully achieve that goal without international cooperation and active involvement of civil society and all relevant partners.

47. Certain that social development could take place only against a matrix of pluralism, democracy, good governance, rule of law, human rights, gender justice and women's empowerment, Bangladesh was currently undergoing a societal transformation by adhering to those values. In 2004, the World Bank had observed that Bangladesh had "quietly but steadily established a track record of progress on many important social and economic indicators" and that Bangladesh had the highest primary school enrolment rates in the developing world, including among poor children.

48. The Government of Bangladesh had invested heavily in education. Primary education had been made compulsory, education was free for girls through the twelfth grade and students were awarded stipends and scholarships. Those measures had contributed considerably to the eradication of illiteracy. Innovative, home-grown ideas, such as non-formal education, had also helped to enhance literacy among people of all ages.

49. In Bangladesh, the family played a vital social role. The Tenth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family, observed in 2004, should further support, promote and strengthen the family at the national and international levels.

50. With regard to young people, Bangladesh focused on education, training, participation, awareness programme, employment, and development. In 1978, it had initiated an action plan on youth employment, which had lead to the creation of a Ministry for youth. A national youth policy had been adopted in 2003. Bangladesh supported all United Nations programmes concerning youth.

51. Older persons living in developing countries faced serious challenges. There was an urgent need to work towards their well-being and full participation in society in consonance with the promises made in Madrid. The Government of Bangladesh had introduced an old-age allowance programme. Other targeted programmes focused on social security and welfare measures (for instance, allowances for aged widows and distressed and deserted old women, and homes for abandoned, dispossessed and disabled aged persons). Geriatric and related issues had been given due importance under the country's fifth five-year plan.

52. Bangladesh was appreciative of the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on a comprehensive and integral international convention to promote and protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities and looked forward to the outcome of that work. Bangladesh has adopted a national policy for persons with disabilities and the Government worked closely with civil society organizations (CSOs) to provide education, training, economic opportunity and rehabilitation programmes for that group. A Disability Welfare Act had been enacted in 2001 and a special foundation for the welfare of the disabled had been established.

53. A coordinated and integrated follow-up to all of the major United Nations conferences was crucial to the attainment of their aims. All States should work together at the United Nations to bring development to the forefront of their goals, place people at the centre of development and ensure a better coordination of the efforts of developed and developing countries.

54. **Mr. Mahtab** (India), after endorsing the statement made by Qatar, said that, according to the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (A/59/120), the work of the Commission for Social Development had not been pursued substantively in the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). That work could be meaningful only if recognized, and only if its outcomes were utilized by governments.

55. The report also commented on the uneven progress towards the achievement of the Summit's main goals because of the inadequate capacity of the governments of developing countries. It was therefore necessary for the international community to strengthen its cooperation and for the Division for Social Policy and Development to undertake an analytical assessment of the issue. It was also necessary to reform the international financial institutions (IFIs), some of whose policies had adverse effects, ensure progress in World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations on commodities and strengthen ECOSOC's oversight role.

56. The report of the Secretary-General alluded to the social aspects of globalisation. Unfortunately, however, it did not in that context refer to the recommendations of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization. India urged the General Assembly, ECOSOC and the Commission for Social Development to give careful consideration to those recommendations.

57. The impact of the developmental strategy pursued by India over the past two decades in the social sector, as measured through poverty-reduction, population-growth, education and health indicators, had comprised significant improvements. There was, however, a need to accelerate efforts to ameliorate the quality of life, strengthen public-private partnerships and promote the involvement of local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the implementation of social programmes.

58. While literacy rates in India had increased from 18 percent in 1951 to 65 percent in 2001 and elementary education had become a fundamental right, education had been identified as a key area of vulnerability that needed to be addressed. Towards that end, the Government planned to raise public spending on education at the federal and state levels and to set up a National Commission on Education to allocate resources and monitor programmes. It also planned to increase public spending on health in coming years, with emphasis on primary health care and on a national health-insurance scheme for poor families.

59. The Secretary-General's note on the implementation of the international plan of action for the United Nations Literacy Decade (A/59/267) was indeed alarming, in view of the fact that close to one billion people were illiterate. The problem needed to be acted upon without any further delay.

60. The Second World Assembly on Ageing in 2002 had drawn the international community's attention to an area that had not until then received adequate consideration. The Secretary General's report (A/59/164) provided a thorough overview of action that

had been and should further be taken in order to address the needs of an ageing population. United Nations agencies and civil society, particularly NGOs, could provide key support and backstopping to governments in meeting their obligations in that area.

61. The Tenth Anniversary of the World Summit for Social Development would be observed in 2005. In that connection, there was an urgent need to assess the results achieved and to put people at the centre of development.

62. **Ms. Ahmed** (Sudan) endorsed the statement made by Qatar on behalf of the group of 77 and China. She said that social development was the governments' responsibility and necessitated greater commitment at the national and international levels. Referring to the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (A/59/120), she stressed that official development assistance (ODA) was crucial to the developing countries and the least developed countries (LDCs) in eradicating poverty and solving the problem of external debt. She called attention to the ten-year review of the follow-up to the World Summit for Social development and to the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, which the Commission for Social Development would conduct at its next session.

63. Sudan was persuaded that poverty and inequality between and within States could not be eliminated without improving the existing infrastructure, particularly in Africa, and called upon the international community to redouble its efforts to strengthen infrastructure facilities and to create an environment conducive to the development of all economies. Since development was a human right, economic sanctions should not be imposed unilaterally. The right to food and medicines must be guaranteed. Foreign occupation, still a key obstacle to social and economic development, should be brought to an end to enable the countries concerned to exercise sovereignty over their territory. Efficient international cooperation was indispensable in the fight against endemic diseases, particularly malaria, and against HIV/AIDS.

64. The representative of Sudan recalled that the last round of negotiations aimed at signing a peace agreement in her country would start on 17 October 2004. Sudan hoped that the agreement would have a positive effect on its social development and poverty reduction efforts.

65. Older people received special attention in Sudan. The delegation of Sudan welcomed the recommendations for strengthening the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. Efforts were made to ensure that persons with disabilities were active members of Sudanese society, and a national board had been set up to that effect. The Sudanese Government had also set up a plenary committee responsible for following up on the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on a comprehensive and integral international convention to promote and protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities.

66. Moreover, a national committee had been set up to coordinate activities related to the observance of the Tenth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family and a national programme of action had been drawn up in that connection. The Sudanese government had paid special attention to programmes aimed at helping families to fulfil their social mission and strengthening the family's role as a key development factor and an irreplaceable social institution.

67. Sudan welcomed the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report on the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family (A/59/176) and called attention to the landmark International Conference on the Family, to be held in Doha in November 2004, which should consolidate United Nations action with a view to carrying out family-related programmes.

68. **Mr. Heikura** (Finland), speaking under agenda item 94 (a) and as a youth representative of Finland, noted that there were more than a billion children and adolescents and that within ten years they would join the planet's working-age population. They were the best educated generation ever and had a tremendous potential for economic and social development. However, to a large extent, especially in developing countries, only underpaid and insecure jobs with small possibilities for advancement were available to young generations. If young people could not move into productive jobs that enabled them to pay taxes and support public services, there was a substantial risk that the economic investment of governments in education and training would be wasted. Young women and men who found themselves alienated from society,

frustrated by lack of opportunity and without means to take care of themselves were more vulnerable to recruitment by armed groups.

69. The activities of the Youth Employment Network, created by the Secretary-General, had been strengthened by two General Assembly resolutions, encouraging countries to prepare national action plans on youth employment and specifically involve young people in that process. Ten countries, Azerbaijan, Brazil, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Mali, Namibia, Rwanda, Senegal and Sri Lanka, had stepped forward to be lead countries in that process and showcase national plans that others could learn from.

70. The Youth Employment Network tried to ensure that youth were actively involved in those plans. In Azerbaijan, a grouping of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other civil society organizations (CSOs), led by the National Assembly of Youth Organisations, had formed a National Coalition on Youth Employment, which would work closely with the Government and the International Labour Organization (ILO) to develop the National Action Plan on Youth Employment. In Namibia, the Minister of Higher Education had asked the Namibian National Youth Council to assist the Government in forming a multi-stakeholder task team that would work on developing the Action Plan. As a youth representative, the speaker supported that type of activity and hoped that all Member States could learn from the results so far achieved by the Youth Employment Network, and especially from the example of the ten lead countries.

71. Rather than being seen as a target group for which employment must be found, young people should be accepted as partners for development. Just as they wished to be partners in national employment issues, they also wanted to participate in the important work carried out by the United Nations.

72. Although resolution 36/17 adopted by the General Assembly in 1981 had called upon "governments to consider the inclusion of youth representatives in their national delegations to the General Assembly" and although that call had been reconfirmed by resolutions in 1996, 2001 and 2003, almost 180 Member States had still not included Youth Representatives in their national delegations to the General Assembly. It was a matter of concern that currently the Youth Representatives to the General Assembly were far from reflecting the world's cultural diversity. The contribution of youth from developing countries and countries with economies in transition would be of especially important.

73. Lastly, the speaker emphasized that 2005 would be particularly interesting in view of youth's participation in the United Nations system, since the evaluation of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond would be debated then by the General Assembly in plenary. Accordingly, he urged Member States to make all possible efforts to include Youth Representatives in their national delegations to the General Assembly.

74. **Mr. Alday** (Mexico), speaking under agenda items 94 and 95, said that his delegation endorsed the statement made a day earlier by the Rio Group. Mexico supported the reforms undertaken with a view to reinforcing the United Nations in all areas, particularly in the economic and social sectors, in order to promote development and international cooperation and to reduce poverty.

75. Aware of the importance of the family in social life, Mexico supported debates aimed at enhancing the place of the family within the United Nations, which should encourage and help States to collect information on the situation of the family at home in order to identify ways for addressing family-related issues as part of the formulation and implementation of international pro-development policies.

76. Mexico welcomed the progress achieved in negotiations on a comprehensive and integral international convention to promote and protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. That area would henceforth be a priority of international action for social development and human rights. The work accomplished had lead to unprecedented worldwide mobilization for the rights of people with disabilities and for their entitlement to equal opportunities. Mexico believed that efforts should be redoubled to complete that work - demanded for years by the persons concerned - as soon as possible.

77. The Mexican delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's report on the Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing (A/59/164) and endorsed the idea that, in formulating national frameworks for development and poverty-reduction strategies, it was indispensable to take into account ageing-related issues. Mexico encouraged the full human development of aged persons by promoting active ageing, without

discrimination, through instruments and mechanisms ensuring their well-being and the recognition of their capabilities. Accordingly, in line with the principles governing the regional strategy for the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in Latin America and the Caribbean, Mexico had taken various measures in favour of persons over 60, with a view to promoting their health and well-being and a favourable environment for them. Through a national foundation for the elderly, the Mexican Government coordinated the activities of the various bodies active in that area, encouraging the participation of civil society and of the elderly themselves.

78. **Mr. Gansukh** (Mongolia) said that many of the social development goals defined at the World Summit for Social Development had not been pursued to the extent that had been foreseen and that the international community should intensify its efforts in order to implement the commitments made in Copenhagen.

79. Mongolia welcomed the recent report of the World Commission on the Social Dimensions of Globalization and believed that its recommendations should be given high priority. As the Secretary-General had indicated in his report on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (A/59/120), "particular attention should be given to the principle of a people-centred approach and its realization in public policies and development strategies."

80. Mongolia stood committed to the implementation of the social development goals. Considerable progress had been achieved in that area, but further efforts were needed to meet the challenges, including poverty, which was still widespread in the country.

81. Although primarily a responsibility of national governments, social development could not be fully achieved without the participation and partnership of all national stakeholders and the cooperation and support by the international community. In that regard, the Mongolian delegation welcomed the New York Declaration on the Action against Hunger and Poverty adopted on 20 September 2004.

82. Mongolia was convinced that education, and literacy in particular, constituted not only a human right, but also a key prerequisite to social development. It was crucial that governments should allocate adequate budgetary resources to education to enable it to play its role in development and poverty eradication. Worldwide, over 800 million adults were currently illiterate and over 104 million school-age children had no access to schooling. The importance of education should in no case be underestimated.

83. As the Director-General of UNESCO had underscored, the international community would not be able to meet its literacy commitments, if the present trends continued. Action was therefore required. Mongolia had not been idle: it had carried out a series of activities aimed at raising public awareness. It applauded the efforts made by UNESCO as part of the United Nations Literacy Decade, urged all Member States and international organisations to place literacy questions high in their agendas and planned to introduce a draft resolution on that issue.

84. **Ms. Fleming** (World Bank), speaking under agenda items 93 and 94, said that without empowering people to be agents of change, without living up to the commitments made to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and without addressing the social dimensions of development, the world would continue to falter and face imbalance and inequity.

85. The World Bank had come to recognize that social development was about putting people at the centre of development. Development that was not sustainable in social terms would not be sustainable in economic and environmental terms. The key elements of social development, as articulated in the Copenhagen Declaration, formed currently an integral part of the World Bank's support to countries in their work to achieve effective development and eradicate poverty. The Bank had recently launched a programme for social progress based on three fundamental principles: inclusion, cohesion and accountability. The social development strategy expected to be finalized by the end of 2004 would aim to mainstream social development tools throughout the Bank's activities and would be organized around the following four themes: social analysis, community-driven development and social capital, civic engagement and participation, and conflict and development.

86. The Bank had taken careful note of the findings of the Commission on the Social Dimensions of Globalization and would continue to work with partners on their appropriate implementation. The Bank was taking up the challenge to help close the gap between commitments and their actual realization, fully aware that inclusion was a pillar of effective

development. It focused on the important role of women and youth in development, and on the special needs of indigenous communities and people with disabilities, and developed programmes to meet those needs.

87. Humanity was in period of critical imbalance and instability, unprecedented wealth and unprecedented poverty. In the current globalizing, technologically sophisticated world, the international community had the potential to remedy the existing imbalances.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.

United Nations A/C.3/59/SR.4

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Summary record of the 4th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 5 October 2004, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: **Ms. Groux (Vice-Chairman) .... (Switzerland)**

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* **Items which the Committee has decided to consider together.**

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In the absence of Mr. Kuchinsky (Ukraine), Ms. Groux (Switzerland), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 93: Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit on Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (*continued*) (A/59/115 and 120)

Agenda item 94: Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*) (A/59/73)

(a) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*) (A/59/176)

(b) United Nations Literacy Decade: education for all (*continued*) (A/59/76 and Add.1 and Corr.1 and A/59/267)

Agenda item 95: Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing (*continued*) (A/59/164)

1. **Mr. Wali** (Nigeria) said that his Government wished to reaffirm its determination to implement the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly. It recognized the importance of education in promoting social development, eradicating poverty and creating a healthy society. Its commitment to education had produced modest successes, particularly with respect to the enrolment of young girls. In order to meet the challenges in economic and social development, the Government had developed an empowerment and development strategy aimed at laying a foundation for sustainable socio-economic transformation and poverty eradication. Nigeria was committed to improving the quality of life of all its citizens, and wished to reaffirm its commitment to the objectives of the Second World Assembly on Ageing, as well as to the Madrid Declaration and Plan of Action. His Government had put in place policies that addressed the welfare of the elderly and aimed to mainstream them in policies as an instrument of socio-economic development.

2. With respect to the rights of persons with disabilities, plans were being implemented to ensure them equal access to social services, including training, rehabilitation and employment. His Government welcomed the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities, as such a convention would do much to confirm the commitment of the international community to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. Nigeria respected its commitments under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and youth development remained a key aspect of government policy.

3. With regard to the family, the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family provided an opportunity to focus on increased cooperation on family issues at all levels, and his Government had observed the anniversary through various activities aimed at promoting the family.

4. He called attention to paragraph 26 (c) of the Copenhagen Declaration (see document A/59/120, paras. 21 and 22), which recognized that while social development was a national responsibility, it also required the collective commitment and efforts of the international community. The New Partnership for Africa's Development was aimed at promoting such collective action, and Nigeria urged the international community and the United Nations to support African countries in accordance with that compact. It was essential for the United Nations and all stakeholders to ensure appropriate follow-up action to the World Summit for Social Development, the twenty-fourth special session and other international conferences with a view to achieving accelerated social development and implementing the Millennium Development Goals.

5. **Ms. Al-Motawa** (Qatar) said that Qatar's interest in the family unit as the basis of society was reflected in its Constitution and had been translated into State policies to preserve the family and provide support for its well-being. Initiatives aimed at empowering the family to adapt to change were encouraged, and the State had established the Supreme Council for Family Affairs responsible for all aspects of family life.

6. The tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family, currently being celebrated, offered opportunities to assess trends and propose changes to emphasize the vital role of the family in preserving societies. In preparation for the tenth anniversary, Qatar had established a national committee to draw up a programme of celebrations and had designated 15 April each year for celebrating the Qatari family. In November 2004, Qatar would host the Doha International Conference for the Family, which would reaffirm the urgent need to strengthen the family so that it could perform its vital role in society and to increase attention to the family at the national, regional and global levels.

7. The elderly occupied an important position in Qatari society and the State had created social institutions to provide pertinent services. Qatar would host the Doha International Conference on Ageing in April 2005 to create awareness of the need to care for the elderly, while underscoring their potential for participation in development and encouraging research and studies on care mechanisms.

8. **Mr. Kadiri** (Morocco), referring to the celebration in 2005 of the tenth anniversary of the Copenhagen Declaration, noted that the Copenhagen Summit had agreed on measures to combat poverty, illiteracy and HIV/AIDS and to safeguard human rights, while strengthening democracy and good governance. Those undertakings had been further strengthened by the commitments made during the twenty-fourth special session and other major economic and social conferences held over the past decade. Nevertheless, despite the momentous efforts made by the United Nations and other international organizations, and by all the actors in the social and economic sectors, suffering continued, particularly for the peoples of developing countries. Throughout the world, 1.2 billion people still lived in abject poverty and many suffered from HIV/AIDS, particularly in Africa.

9. The international community should shoulder its responsibilities with greater resolve in order to meet the deadlines set. To ensure economic and social progress, the fight against poverty had to remain an all-round priority, and developing countries had to be able to benefit from the opportunities offered by globalization. Morocco had a policy of social promotion designed to fight poverty, improve health-care services, deal with unemployment, develop rural areas and provide basic services. Great importance was attached to strengthening human rights, democracy, gender equality and women's participation in all areas of life, since development could only be successful if all sectors of society were involved.

10. Morocco therefore attached particular importance to the question of persons with disabilities and was endeavouring to ensure that their basic rights were respected and that they were fully integrated into society. It was a member of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities and had taken part in the Working Group that was drafting the convention. In July 2004, a national study on the disabled had been undertaken to better understand their needs; the results would be published in early 2005.

11. The United Nations Literacy Decade had focused on the need for greater efforts if the international community was to attain the respective Millennium Development Goals. Aware of the importance of education and literacy, Morocco had adopted a charter and reorganized services to ensure the best use of capacities in that area. It had also adopted a strategy to ensure that literacy would become a reality.

12. Morocco supported the role of the family as the core of society. Moreover, in January 2004, it had enacted a law to ensure gender equality and to fully integrate women into society.

13. **Ms. Khalil** (Egypt) noted that, over the years, countries had made particular efforts to implement the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. Despite progress at the national and international levels, however, it would not be possible to attain all the goals.

14. Her delegation wished to highlight a few points in the report of the Commission for Social Development (E/2004/26). The new communication technologies had led to a more interdependent world, not merely with regard to economic and trade relations or the distribution of wealth, but also related to issues such as social interaction. Globalization and interdependence had the potential to provide numerous benefits. They could lead to better governance at a global level; for example, if well managed, a global market could benefit all and result in material progress and the alleviation of poverty. However, currently, globalization was creating resources that were not

distributed equally and had adversely affected some workers and communities, even in some developed countries. The new technologies had reduced a number of barriers; however, an extensive survey should be made of the impact of globalization on social issues.

15. To celebrate the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family, the Egyptian Ministry of Social Affairs had set up many advisory bureaux with a view to creating a healthy family environment for children. To strengthen the role of the family and raise awareness of its importance, the Government was providing benefits to all members of the family. Furthermore, non-governmental organizations were implementing projects to train family members in crafts and trades, and had established a professional training centre for school dropouts.

16. **Ms. García Matos** (Venezuela) said that her Government was committed to giving social development a primary role on the international agenda. Venezuela had been elected to the Commission for Social Development and intended to participate actively in all areas of its work. It had demonstrated its commitment through the submission of a draft resolution in the General Assembly and, within the Organization of American States, a proposal for the establishment of an international humanitarian fund to combat poverty and promote social development.

17. Venezuela was undergoing a transition towards a new social compact based on equality, shared responsibility and inclusion in the exercise of political, economic and social rights. So-called "social missions" had been established as strategic tools for the elimination of inequality, discrimination and poverty. A series of such missions in the field of education had led to a marked increase in the number of children enrolled in school, especially in rural areas. Adult-literacy programmes and a plan to ensure access for all citizens to secondary and university education were also the focus of social missions. Under the Constitution, equal rights were guaranteed to the elderly, and a number of programmes, including economic assistance, health care and vocational training, had been designed for them. The new policy of social inclusion was based on the belief that education, job creation, social investment and accessible public services would overcome poverty and discrimination. Venezuela supported the efforts to draft a convention on the rights of persons with disabilities, which should reflect the interests of all disabled persons without distinction.

18. In order to resolve the social problems generated by neoliberalism and globalization, economic and financial resources must be provided in a stable and secure way without political conditions. A common strategy for interaction between the economic and social sectors was the only way to combat poverty.

19. **Mr. Melenevskyi** (Ukraine) said that the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly had defined clear and ambitious objectives, but in the current reality of globalization, those objectives would not be achieved unless the Millennium Development Goals were implemented. The degree of involvement by the people in social development issues determined the legitimacy of policies in those areas. The people-centred model of development should be based on good economic performance, a high level of social protection, education and dialogue. Ukraine had just been elected to the Commission for Social Development for a term beginning in 2005 and looked forward to active participation.

20. The private sector played an important role in social development, and special attention should be given to the principles of the Global Compact (A/59/1, para. 292). The International Labour Organization (ILO) had done a great deal of useful work on a common approach to social development and partnerships. The effective management of globalization and its social dimension should be considered important components for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. He drew attention to the conclusions of the ILO World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization (A/59/98-E/2004/79). Globalization was often viewed as divisive, yet coordinated measures aimed at reforming the global economic system and strengthening governance at the national level could redress the imbalances. Managing globalization required an integrated approach encompassing social, economic, employment and environmental policies with the full involvement of all stakeholders.

21. **Mr. Hyassat** (Jordan) said that his delegation agreed with the conclusions reached in the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General

Assembly (A/59/120) on the reasons for the failure to achieve the desired results. The forthcoming ten-year review would help to focus on weaknesses and on ways to intensify implementation.

22. His delegation was concerned that rates of illiteracy were rising around the world, especially among women and girls, and supported efforts to enhance the activities of the United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-2012). It welcomed the progress made in implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, and the efforts to involve the elderly in actions to increase their well-being. Jordan was also committed to the principle of equal rights for persons with disabilities and supported the negotiation of a convention. It also supported the inclusion of a separate item on disability in the Committee's agenda.

23. **Ms. Adjalova** (Azerbaijan) noted that economic development was a major factor in promoting social progress, but in order to sustain such development, measures to promote social development must become an integral element of the national development agenda. Azerbaijan believed that the primary goal of social development policy was to establish an effective social security and social services system for the whole population, regardless of age, race, gender or social status. Factors like education, employment, health care, support to youth and families and democratic institutions were essential. Extending social programmes to all sectors of the population, including women, the elderly and youth, was a key element in promoting social justice and cohesion

24. Azerbaijan was a member country of the Youth Employment Network established on an initiative of the Secretary-General, and remained committed to its objectives. Programmes for the development and support of the family also received priority. It welcomed the observance of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family, which would draw renewed attention to family issues, policies and programmes. Given the importance Azerbaijan attached to the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, a pension bill was currently under consideration, along with measures to establish a system of social services for older people. It was also seeking to provide protection for persons with disabilities by strengthening their social status and creating job opportunities that would help them to achieve independence.

25. Efforts were being made to improve living standards for refugees and internally displaced persons in the seven regions of Azerbaijan where armed conflict had destroyed infrastructure and the means of production. Addressing the needs of those people exceeded the capacity of the country, which had an economy in transition. Funds were being allocated from the State Oil Fund to rebuild infrastructure, including education and health-care facilities, and to provide micro-credit for small and medium-sized enterprises.

26. **Mr. Badji** (Senegal) said that, more than ever, the international community must emphasize social harmony in the countries of Africa by promoting a poverty-eradication policy based on voluntary action to eliminate youth unemployment, abandonment of the elderly, marginalization of persons with disabilities and discrimination in all its forms. Vulnerable groups were an integral part of society and should enjoy full status as active participants in national life. They also had a right to social and legal protection.

27. Senegal placed priority on education and youth employment, and therefore it welcomed the proclamation of the United Nations Literacy Decade, which embodied the objectives of the World Education Forum held in Dakar in April 2000. Literacy was a challenge in many countries, and all sectors of society, from Governments to the private sector, civil society, non-governmental organizations and local communities, must join to meet that challenge.

28. He appealed to donors to consider the urgency of the situation and to honour their commitments to help to promote the well-being of the citizens of the global village.

29. **Ms. Abeysekera** (Sri Lanka) said that social development was one of the keys to the advancement of humanity, because it focused on people and targeted society's more vulnerable groups. Since the 1950s Sri Lanka had focused on ensuring that people had access to the essentials required for livelihood, often at the expense of economic growth, and had thus achieved remarkable advances in social development, particularly in education and health. As a follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development, her Government had established a committee to implement its programmes, under the Ministry of Social Welfare. It had also developed a social development management system to monitor progress, and had

organized a seminar on follow-up to the World Summit, as well as a national conference on strategies and orientation, in partnership with non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

30. The impact of market forces had increased her Government's responsibility for social development and the protection of the disadvantaged. Specific authorities were addressing the problems of resettlement and rehabilitation, and the Government had developed policies on disability, in line with the recommendations of the Summit, and on ageing, in line with the Madrid Plan of Action. The 2002 Act for the Protection of the Rights of the Elderly had enabled the elderly, for the first time, to seek legal redress from their children for neglect, and had led to the creation of village committees of elderly persons, which were responsible for organizing programmes and taking decisions. Their recommendations were then taken up by the National Council for the Elderly. The Government's actions were well supported by non-governmental organizations and religious groups. A private foundation had organized workshops for persons with disabilities. Her Government recognized the need for disaggregated data on disability and ageing, and the Ministry of Social Welfare was leading the country's efforts in that regard, with special focus on elderly women, who were more numerous than elderly men.

31. Efforts to alleviate social problems were made more difficult by the long years of conflict in her country and by the lack of funds. Sri Lanka welcomed the efforts to be made by the United Nations and the international community during the United Nations Literacy Decade and hoped that literacy and primary school enrolment would increase substantially. While welcoming the focus of the United Nations on people-centred social development and on the family as the nucleus of society, she noted that related policies and strategies could only succeed if they were constructed carefully and in a cost-effective manner.

32. **Mr. Limon** (Suriname) said that, in its national policy statement for the period 2000-2005, his Government had identified the development of education, health care, employment, social security and housing as its main priorities. National social policy was implemented in close cooperation with civil society, and special attention was given to the most disadvantaged groups. A social security system had been set up, programmes for health reform and low-income shelters were being implemented, and a housing plan would soon be launched. Moreover, a number of studies had been undertaken on poverty eradication, and the Government was working closely with the private sector and non-governmental organizations in that regard. It was important that vulnerable groups should participate in development. High priority was given to the promotion and protection of the rights of children and to the development of children and youth, and a bureau for the rights of the child had been reactivated in keeping with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Education was a key factor for achieving sustainable development, and his Government had formulated a programme for the development of human resources. His country firmly believed that progress in social development depended on international cooperation and on the implementation of commitments made at the major world summits.

33. With a view to marking the tenth anniversary of the World Summit, the Commission for Social Development would be reviewing implementation of its outcome, as well as of the outcome of the twenty-fourth special session. While reaffirming the commitments made by his country at the World Summit, he noted that much remained to be done to improve the social situation of many people in society. Implementation should be the focus of efforts to achieve social development, and the review process should therefore focus on shortfalls in that regard.

34. **Mr. Tekle** (Eritrea) said that, despite the good intentions expressed at the World Summit, no meaningful change had taken place over the subsequent years, and in some cases conditions had worsened. The Horn of Africa, for example, had yet again been ravaged by famine. Meaningful change could occur only if there was a concerted effort to implement the various programmes adopted by the international community. His Government had taken steps to ensure that all its social and economic policies and programmes were informed by the need to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, and were focused on people. His delegation subscribed to the views expressed by the Secretary-General in his report on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (A/59/120), to the effect that meaningful social progress could not be achieved without sustained economic development,

buttressed by stable economic conditions. It also supported the recommendations relating to the harmonization of the goals and objectives of social policies and the rationalization of national and international cooperation for development programmes.

35. While his Government shared the belief that each country was primarily responsible for its own socio-economic development, it also recognized the essential need for international partnership and cooperation to achieve social development goals. It therefore endorsed the Secretary-General's recommendations for partnership between rich and poor countries in the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit and of the Millennium Development Goals. In that regard, developed countries should increase their official development assistance to the agreed level of 0.7 per cent of gross national product, poor countries should be allowed to participate in decision-making in international economic affairs, including those of the World Trade Organization and measures should be taken to offset the negative effects of globalization. It was widely accepted that there was a direct link between peace and development, and the Horn of Africa had always been a classic example of the destructive effects of wars and conflicts. Eritrea's development agenda had always focused on poverty reduction. The Government had recently formulated an interim poverty reduction plan, in consultation with key stakeholders, and had also prepared a food security strategy. Both were key components of the country's national development strategy, which was people-centred and emphasized popular participation and gender equality.

36. **Archbishop Migliore** (Holy See) said that, although development in general was often the subject of debate at the United Nations, more should be said about social development in particular. Over the years, the forces of globalization had exacerbated the insecurities associated with poverty and vulnerability, and society's vulnerable groups had been sidelined to varying degrees. Economic progress must be accompanied by socio-political progress. Policy frameworks and development plans should create an environment that would enable all members of society to take charge of their own development. In that regard, his delegation welcomed the various United Nations declarations of the past decade, including the Copenhagen and Johannesburg Declarations. Social policies for the protection of vulnerable individuals could be effective only if they succeeded in strengthening natural social groups — small communities and the family — and generated a sense of responsibility in civil society towards vulnerable sectors. His delegation wished to emphasize the need for protection of the family, and had participated in celebrating the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family. It was also actively involved in the current work to draft a convention on the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. That work must become the vehicle by which the concerns of disabled persons were taken into account, so that they could fully participate in the right to life.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.

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Summary record of the 5th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 6 October 2004, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Kuchinsky (Ukraine)
later: Ms. Kusorgbor (Vice-Chairman) (Ghana)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Agenda item 93: Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (*continued*) (A/59/120 and A/59/115)

Agenda item 94: Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*) (A/59/73)

(a) **Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family** (*continued*) (A/59/176 and A/C.3/59/L.2)

(b) **United Nations Literacy Decade: education for all** (*continued*) (A/59/267)

Agenda item 95: Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing (*continued*) (A/59/164)

1. **The Chairman**, referring to the proposal to invite two further special rapporteurs and an independent expert to submit their reports to the Third Committee, said that it raised three problems: the budgetary implications of their participation, their physical availability, and the impact their statements would have on the Committee's programme of work. He suggested that discussion of the proposal and any decision on the matter should be deferred to the morning meeting on Monday, 11 October 2004.

2. *It was so decided.*

3. **Mr. Axelsson** (Sweden), representing his country's youth and speaking under agenda item 94, welcomed his Government's decision to allow Sweden's 100 youth organizations to elect a representative. It must be acknowledged that young men and women were a resource for development rather than a target group for aid. Their creativity, engagement and critical thinking made them a vital and unlimited resource for sustainable development and the Millennium Development Goals. But beyond that, the time had come to start looking at things in a new way and to act and think locally as well as globally.

4. He urged all nations to give the youth of the world a voice by sending a national youth representative to the United Nations General Assembly in 2005. That would mean that nations with more means must help the more disadvantaged nations so that all the regions of the world were duly represented. It also meant that non-governmental organizations should be involved in the election of those representatives. The year 2005 was particularly important since nations had undertaken in 1995 to implement the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond and the decision had been taken in 2003 to discuss and evaluate its implementation two years later. He therefore called upon all States to fulfil their commitments and to carry out that evaluation in all seriousness.

5. The youth of Sweden also called on all nations to implement — locally, nationally and globally — policies consistent with four basic facts: that the youth of the world were not a problematic group of children, but a tremendous resource for development; that they had been acting locally for centuries and by so doing had made a difference; that the time had come to allow them to take a more active part in shaping the future of the world, and that there could be no such thing as good governance without youth participation. In conclusion, he stressed that the question was not whether the youth of the world could and would act locally as well as globally, but whether the nations of the world were willing to tap into that enormous resource.

6. **Mr. Al-Zaabi** (United Arab Emirates), speaking under agenda item 94, said that the family was the most important unit of society and a factor in emotional, physical and social stability. The family should therefore be celebrated annually and not merely in a single international year. His Government's measures to promote the family included the promulgation in 2003 of a royal decree establishing the Higher Council for Childhood and Maternity, with the goal of protecting the welfare of mothers and children; accession to all the human rights conventions and treaties; promulgation of laws derived from the Sharia to protect the rights of individuals; the forthcoming promulgation of a personal-status law that would govern family relations. Other measures had been taken to encourage young people to start a family (financial assistance and low interest loans, and the Marriage Fund Facility founded in 1993). Laws had also been promulgated to protect the rights of working women.

7. Turning to the fight against illiteracy, he said that his delegation approved of the recommendations set forth in the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the International Plan of Action for the United Nations Literacy Decade (A/59/267) and called on the international community to redouble its efforts to eradicate the scourge of illiteracy. Royal directives based on the realization of the importance of the role of education in social development and as an investment in human beings had been adopted in order to improve educational systems in the country; the State was considering providing free education and making primary education compulsory. His Government was also endeavouring to improve the quality of education. Specifically, it had formulated a plan to eliminate illiteracy and had established 122 literacy centres. The illiteracy rate had dropped to 10 per cent and it was expected that full literacy would be attained in five years' time. He hoped that the deliberations of the Third Committee would help to discover ways of creating a society that included all human beings without distinction and that responded to the needs of the vulnerable.

8. **Ms. Ramiro Lopez** (Philippines), after associating herself with the statement made by Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, expressed support for the Secretary-General's recommendation that the Commission include the situation of older women in its agenda. The Philippine Congress had recently granted additional benefits and privileges to senior citizens by amending Act No. 7432, an act to maximize the contribution of senior citizens to nation-building. The Philippine delegation noted the Secretary-General's call in paragraph 58 (a) of his report (A/59/176) to establish three institutional pillars in integrating family issues into national development policies. In April 2004, the President had issued a presidential proclamation directing the National Committee on the Filipino Family to coordinate the observance of the International Year of the Family and the preparation of a 10-year plan for the Filipino family for 2005-2015.

9. The Philippines endeavoured to pursue policies consistent with the overarching social development objectives embodied in texts adopted by Member States in an effort to attain a "society for all" based on respect for individual dignity and human rights. Over the period 2001-2004, her Government had focused mainly on the disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. The programmes put in place aimed at improving access to quality education, health, nutrition and reproductive health care. Social services expenditure over the previous three years had averaged one quarter of the country's total expenditures, with the bulk devoted to education, culture and manpower development. Although significant achievements had been accomplished, challenges persisted and called for priority action in many areas.

10. First, developing countries needed to address weaknesses in their macroeconomic environments and fiscal situations through more aggressive revenue mobilization and efficient management of expenditures. Second, it was necessary to pursue growth geared to the poor, which would enable them to play a dynamic part in economic activities and benefit from them, by abolishing spatial disparities, particularly the gap between urban and rural communities. Third, improvement of employment policies had to go hand in hand with reforms to stabilize the macroeconomy and accelerate long-term growth. Fourth, there was a need for a complete and credible system at all levels to make for more appropriate interventions specific to the needs of the most vulnerable. There was also a need to improve the quality of basic education in an attempt to boost academic performance, especially in rural communities, develop a new system of outcome assessment and adopt innovative approaches. Fifth, a credible and complete database for monitoring and formulating policy actions was needed.

11. The challenges to be faced might differ from country to country, but all countries must adopt the same bold approach and must be strong in the conviction that among the many important missions and responsibilities of government, the duty to ensure that everyone lived a secure, prosperous and productive life remained the supreme goal.

12. **Ms. Dib** (Austria), speaking on behalf of Austrian youth under agenda item 94, said that democracy was celebrated as a great success of the twentieth century, in which context it was regrettable that the turnout at elections was so low, at least in Europe and especially among young people. It was not that youth were uninterested in politics; rather, they were ill-prepared and poorly informed, in addition to which they wished to feel that they were treated as full and equal partners. The participation of young people

in democracy should be supported in school, at home and by politicians.

13. Nearly every political issue could be linked to youth politics. On the question of racism and prejudices, for example, projects for children and young people could be initiated in schools. Austria already had such a project, called "School without racism", which also supported youth camps where young refugees met young people from Austria.

14. Turning to the question of gender equality, she referred to the Millennium Development Goal of eliminating gender disparity in all levels of education by no later than 2015. Although that was one of the most important of the Goals, it did not go far enough. Legal equality did not automatically lead to real equality between girls and boys or between women and men; therefore, education must teach gender equality. Moreover, illiteracy affected mostly women and girls and the majority of people living in poverty were women.

15. With reference to the Millennium Declaration and the document "A World Fit for Children" adopted by the General Assembly at its twenty-seventh special session, she reminded all Governments that their goal was to create a better world for young people, who wanted to be part of the discussions and decisions that would shape the world in which they would live. Welcoming the participation of youth representatives in the discussions of the Third Committee as an important sign, she called on all Member States to ensure the increased participation of young people from all regions of the world, including developing countries, in the Committee's activities, as their greater open-mindedness would enrich the work of every national delegation and of the United Nations as a whole.

16. **Ms. Otiti** (Uganda), after associating her delegation with the statement made by Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that her Government had established and strengthened its Department for the Disabled and Elderly. It had also established a national task force on ageing and its future plans included the establishment of a national equal opportunities commission with an older persons' desk that would be responsible for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of areas of concern to older people.

17. Although Uganda provided a good example of best practices to be followed in combating HIV/AIDS, only modest achievements had been registered. Many unanticipated challenges remained to be overcome. In that connection, her Government had adopted various policies, such as a National Overarching Policy on HIV/AIDS, a National Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children policy, a national condom policy and strategy, a national policy on HIV/AIDS and the world of work, a voluntary counselling and testing policy and a national antiretroviral policy. The National Strategic Framework for the period 2000-2006 had been revised and its main objectives were now to reduce HIV prevalence by 25 per cent, strengthen the national capacity to coordinate the response to the pandemic, mitigate the psychosocial and economic effects of HIV/AIDS, improve the quality of life of people living with HIV/AIDS and mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS on development in Uganda. Crucial to that effort were such initiatives as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the World Bank Multi-Country HIV/AIDS Programme for Africa, the Great Lakes Initiative on AIDS and the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. For Uganda, the way forward was to ensure that efforts were better coordinated and targeted to the population in need, with emphasis on food security, nutritional support and rights of vulnerable groups.

18. The absence of a definition for literacy was regrettable. She agreed with the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) that literacy and poverty eradication were closely linked. It was therefore essential to adopt a multidimensional approach to poverty eradication. As a result of the Universal Primary Education initiative, the number of children enrolled in Ugandan primary schools had risen from 2.5 million in 1986 to 7.5 million currently and attention was now being focused on secondary education. The ideals of the Poverty Eradication Action Plan had been mainstreamed and would be operationalized by the Social Development Sector Strategies Investment Plan. In conclusion, she stressed the vital need to enhance the capacity of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in order to address the challenges of development, governance and security facing Africa.

19. **Mr. Bhusal** (Nepal), after aligning himself with the statement made by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the adoption of the Copenhagen Declaration and

Programme of Action had put people at the heart of the development process.

20. Developing countries, in particular the least developed countries (LDCs), were mired in poverty, hunger and disease, a situation further complicated by the eruption of conflicts in Asia and Africa. Although national governments had the primary responsibility for social development, social integration would not be achieved without commitment and joint action on the part of the international community.

21. Realization of the internationally agreed development targets, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, demanded a new partnership between the developed and developing countries with a view to sound policies, enhanced financial resources, increased foreign direct investment, fair and transparent international trade, fulfilment of the targets for official development assistance, debt relief measures and coherence in international monetary, financial and trading systems.

22. The international community should fulfil the pledges made at the World Summit for Social Development. The developed countries should also make good on their promise to provide 0.7 per cent of their national income for socio-economic development in the poor countries and between 0.15 and 0.20 per cent of their gross domestic product as official development assistance for the least developed countries, as agreed at the Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development.

23. Nepal welcomed the report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization. The recommendations which it contained should be put into effect in order to promote social development in developing countries. His Government had been implementing social development programmes aimed at reducing poverty and generating employment opportunities. Its poverty reduction strategy was designed to promote economic growth, social sector development and programmes for social inclusion and good governance. It had also allocated between 35 and 40 per cent of its national budget to social sector development, as a result of which substantial social progress had been achieved in the form of longer life expectancy, lower maternal and child mortality rates, higher literacy rates and better delivery of public services.

24. Nepal attached importance to the aspirations of its young people and wished to exploit their full potential in the interest of development by providing them with gainful employment opportunities. It also believed that greater focus should be placed on proper implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth.

25. Nepal supported the work of the fourth session of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities. Furthermore, it believed that the international community should make a more generous contribution to the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action on Ageing in order to promote and protect the rights of older persons.

26. **Ms. Al Haj Ali** (Syrian Arab Republic), associated her delegation with the statement made by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and said that, despite the progress made in the attainment of the objectives set by the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, social development in the poor countries was still hampered by numerous obstacles. The gulf between the rich and the poor countries, the adverse effects of globalization, the increase in poverty, the substantial limitations of international cooperation and the economic sanctions imposed on certain countries meant that the developing countries would have difficulty in attaining the objectives of Copenhagen and of Copenhagen +5.

27. Young people made up a high proportion of the Syrian population; while that was undoubtedly an asset, it also presented difficulties for social development. Her Government had taken numerous steps to improve the situation of young people, such as free education at all levels, improving the quality of education, combating unemployment and promoting employment for women. A national commission had been made responsible for job creation and for granting credit to young unemployed people who wished to set up a business.

28. In accordance with the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, her Government had adopted legislation, in the framework of the Arab Plan of Action on Ageing to the year 2015, for the provision of health care and social protection to elderly people.

29. Her Government was committed to the principle of the family and, in the context of preparations for the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family, in cooperation with other Arab countries and with the participation of civil society organizations, had launched a televised campaign to promote awareness of the problems of families, published brochures giving indicators of the situation of families and created an independent commission responsible for family matters.

30. Her Government had incorporated the promotion of the rights of handicapped people in its socio-economic development programmes and had, in particular, guaranteed the rights of the handicapped to social protection, education and employment. Activities were carried out regularly in collaboration with civil society organizations to enable them to make their voices heard and to promote public awareness of questions relating to the protection of the rights of people with disabilities. For the period 2004-2013, the State had also put in place a programme to enhance the dignity of handicapped children. At the international level, the Syrian Arab Republic was participating actively in the deliberations of the United Nations Ad Hoc Committee for a Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

31. Her delegation welcomed the proclamation of the United Nations Literacy Decade and was engaged in integrating literacy, together with other social issues, in its national policies.

32. There were numerous difficulties hampering the attainment of the objectives of Copenhagen and Copenhagen +5 for all the developing countries, but the Syrian Arab Republic faced a particular obstacle in the region, namely the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The occupation of the Syrian Golan had deprived the country of human and material resources, and the economic, social and humanitarian situation in the occupied Arab territories was deteriorating. Peace was a precondition for social development. As it had done the previous year, Syria appealed to the international community to bring to an end as a matter of urgency to the occupation of the Arab territories in order to avoid a disaster with worldwide implications.

33. **Mr. Le Luong Minh** (Viet Nam) associated his country with the statement made by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and recalled that 2005 would mark the tenth anniversary of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development.

34. Viet Nam warmly welcomed the consensus of the international community on the importance of social development as one of the major priorities in its overall development objectives. The development of strategies for eradicating poverty, enhancing productive employment, promoting social integration and the participation of entire populations, including the most disadvantaged groups, enhancing social protection and reducing vulnerability in the context of globalization were major achievements and had significantly improved the living conditions of the population in various countries.

35. However, there remained many obstacles to social development. The gap between rich and poor countries was getting wider; wars and ethnic and religious conflicts were preventing countries from using their resources for social development. A large part of the world's population continued to live in poverty, the HIV/AIDS pandemic continued to spread, and social evils, such as drug addiction, corruption, smuggling and organized crime, continued in many regions of the world. To overcome those difficulties, coherent economic policies must be put in place at both national and international levels. Worldwide solidarity was more important than ever and countries should cooperate to reform international institutions, accord preferential treatment in market access to developing countries, promote debt restructuring, reduction and cancellation for developing countries, and finance social development projects.

36. Viet Nam was integrating social development in the measures it took to promote economic growth. In 2003, 36.9 per cent of the budget had been devoted to social development, of which 8 per cent was for education and training and 6.3 per cent for health care.

37. Among the programmes which had enabled substantial progress to be achieved in the field of social development, mention should be made of the comprehensive strategy for economic growth and poverty eradication for the period 2001-2010, the establishment of the National Fund for Employment and the adoption of policies to provide health care for the poor.

38. Half of the Vietnamese population consisted of young people. In line with commitments under the

1995 World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, adopted by the United Nations in 1995, Viet Nam placed a high priority on youth programmes, in particular, formulating a strategy for youth development to the year 2010 and creating a National Committee on Vietnamese Youth whose mandate was to formulate policies for young people. In March 2004, the Prime Minister had approved the development programme for young people for the period 2004-2005, the focus of which was on solving urgent issues such as job counselling, employment, fighting social evils and participation in socio-economic development activities, and had declared the month of March each year as "the month of young people".

39. Viet Nam was actively implementing the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. Programmes for the care of elderly people were being integrated into socio-economic development programmes. The Viet Nam Association of Elderly Persons, established in 1995, had branches in all cities and provinces. The ordinance on elderly persons had been approved in 2000. The National Committee for Elderly People had been established in August 2004, and a national plan of action for the elderly for the period 2005-2010 was being worked out.

40. **Mr. Ndimeni** (South Africa), after associating himself with the statement made by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that his Government, which had presided over the Commission for Social Development since February 2004, was conscious of the need to elaborate strategies to eradicate poverty, achieve full and productive employment, enhance social integration and eradicate social exclusion, marginalization and underdevelopment. Those strategies formed the cornerstone of the commitments made at the World Summit for Social Development held in Copenhagen, and the forty-third session of the Commission should contribute concretely to the preparations for the meeting on the follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit in September 2005.

41. South Africa expected that the 10-year review of the World Summit for Social Development would produce an outcome document that would inform the international community on the best strategies and measures to ensure that globalization benefited all. The report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, entitled "A Fair Globalization: Creating Opportunities for All", was therefore timely and allowed for meaningful debate, the purpose of which was to seek a common understanding on eliminating the differences between the countries that the Commission was prepared to assist.

42. South Africa was a part of Africa, to which Commitment 7 of the Copenhagen Declaration was devoted. In 2003 and 2004, the Group of 77 and China had introduced important resolutions on the implementation of the objectives of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) to make sure that NEPAD became part of the 10-year review and that cooperation with the international community, the private sector and society guaranteed a better life for all.

43. His Government strongly believed that it was necessary to elaborate, as a complement to international human rights law, a comprehensive and integral international convention to promote and protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities, in order to fill the existing gaps in that law that had resulted from neglect, discrimination, marginalization and social exclusion of persons with disabilities. The convention should: (a) reaffirm the legal obligations under human rights treaty law as covering all human beings, including persons with disabilities; (b) emphasize that non-discrimination derived from the right to equal protection under the law; and (c) focus on the need to create in all areas an environment adapted to the specific needs of persons with disabilities.

44. It was also important to mark the International Year of the Family and the International Year of Older Persons. South Africa had proclaimed October the Social Development Month. During the current year, it would also commemorate its 10 years of freedom and the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family. All of humanity considered the family as a basic element of society. In South Africa, the family was not only an agent for political, economic, cultural and social change but also a vehicle for the care, protection and development of its members. The Plan of Action on the Family in Africa, adopted in Cotonou, Benin, in 2004, was a significant initiative, because it pertained to several issues such as poverty reduction, the right to social services, promotion of the environment, sustainable development, strengthening of family relationships, peace and security, follow up,

monitoring and evaluation, and would be the basis for developing South Africa's family policy.

45. Concerning the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, in the previous 10 years South Africa had made progress in the area of education and skills development for young people, two priorities of his Government. By the end of 2004, at least 5,000 young people out of school, without employment or training, would be serving in health, social development, conservation, environmental protection and infrastructure development programmes, which should ensure their long-term integration and participation in society.

46. *Ms. Kusorgbor (Ghana), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

47. **Mr. Nsemi** (Congo), speaking under agenda item 93, associated himself with the statement made by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. In 1995, at the World Summit for Social Development, the international community had been committed to putting people at the centre of national and international development policies. The international community had reaffirmed that commitment in the new measures to accelerate social development adopted at the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly in 2000, but it was far from attaining the goals that it had set in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action.

48. The Congo was a victim of globalization, which had changed the parameters of social development in all countries. In order to solve the problems caused by the debt burden (increase in poverty, widespread unemployment that affected mainly young persons, and other social scourges such as the phenomenon of street children, child trafficking and prostitution), the President of the Republic of the Congo had established a programme entitled "Fresh Hope". He had also, in cooperation with the international financial institutions, elaborated a programme for the 2004-2009 period consistent with the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper.

49. Acutely aware of the question of youth employment, his Government had, in particular, launched a 10-year farming and fisheries programme (2004-2013) to create sustainable employment, improve the living standards of farmers, reduce dependence on food handouts and re-establish macroeconomic equilibria.

50. A national demobilization and reintegration programme was being carried out with the support of the Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Programme, the World Bank and the European Union.

51. Lastly, to combat HIV/AIDS, one of the leading causes of morbidity and mortality in the Congo, his Government had established a national strategy to combat the pandemic for the 2003-2007 period that relied on decentralization and a multisectoral approach, and had established a National Council to Combat HIV/AIDS under the personal authority of the Head of State.

52. Like other developing and least developed countries, which were susceptible to serious financial crises, insecurity, poverty, exclusion, inequality with respect to growth and income distribution and problems related to education and health, the Congo would not be able to meet the challenge of social development on its own. It required the assistance of the international community and welcomed in particular the work of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, which was seeking to encourage dialogue between various countries in order to promote a more democratic and more equitable world order. His Government also looked forward to the forty-third session of the Commission for Social Development and the events that would be organized during the tenth anniversary of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, which would allow for progress towards meeting the commitments that the international community had made in 1995.

53. **Mr. Ivanou** (Belarus) said that while the efforts to implement the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action as well as the decisions of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly had been insufficient, they had nonetheless led national and international policy makers to place greater stress on social development. Belarus was satisfied with the detailed analysis put forward in the report of the Secretary-General on implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (A/59/120).

54. The transition to multi-year planning had enabled the Commission for Social Development to focus on current problems, although many of its documents still lacked practical recommendations and decisions. The

Commission must encourage enhanced partnership between developed countries, developing countries and countries in transition in order to contribute to the attainment of the social development goals agreed upon at the international level. The Economic and Social Council must not merely "take note" of the decisions of the Commission; it must give them increased attention, particularly during the high-level segment.

55. Concerned to give the market economy a social dimension, his Government had adopted a policy of economic stabilization and increasing wages, pensions and benefits. Therefore, the number of persons living below the poverty line had decreased; thanks to his Government's efforts to combat poverty, less than 2 per cent of the population lived in absolute poverty, and the unemployment rate was only 2 per cent. His Government devoted 14 per cent of its GDP to public assistance to vulnerable families, older persons and persons with disabilities and to the development of infrastructure and social services. It was also implementing its third programme to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, which had affected one in five inhabitants in Belarus.

56. The celebration of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family had refocused the international community's attention on the family and its problems. The Belarusian delegation believed that there was a need to strengthen the role played by the United Nations in that area. For its part, Belarus based its policy on the equal sharing of family obligations between men and women, paramount concern for the interests of the child, and partnership between the family and the State, and it was endeavouring to protect families from poverty by granting targeted assistance and various benefits.

57. Belarus commended the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities at its third and fourth sessions. The greatest possible flexibility must be applied to that process to avoid differences that would slow down the elaboration of that instrument. To assist its 480,000 persons with disabilities, Belarus had adopted various programmes essentially to eliminate the obstacles that prevented their integration into society. It was endeavouring to find them a place in the world of work by offering benefits to their employers. His Government planned to establish centres enabling persons with disabilities to receive training and a job.

58. The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing provided a clear response to population change. The Commission for Social Development had a particular role to play because it must coordinate the follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing. Belarus hoped that the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat would broaden its activities by offering assistance to Member States to help them achieve the Madrid International Plan of Action. Older persons were one of Belarus's priorities. Therefore, his Government envisaged a combined public and private pension system.

59. **Ms. Radhi** (Bahrain), speaking under agenda item 94, said that her delegation associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. People were both the target of and a vehicle for development. The Bahraini Constitution recognized the gamut of political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights, as well as the importance of the family, and national bodies had been asked to draw up laws to safeguard the rights of all family members. In fact, her country was a party to all the international conventions that safeguarded the rights of young people, older persons and persons with disabilities, in particular the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and it would soon accede to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Strategies still needed to be drawn up to ensure that all groups in society participated more fully in the development process.

60. Young people played a crucial role in ensuring prosperity, progress and sustainable development. Her country had expanded democratic freedoms since the accession of the new king, enabling young people to become more actively involved in political life and civil society. A consultative committee had drawn up a plan for a Youth Parliament which should become operational between October 2004 and March 2006 and, with the support of the British Council and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), measures had been taken to raise awareness among the population. A strategy had also been finalized to identify the needs of young people and gather information on education, sport, leisure, culture,

participation and fundamental rights, health, the environment and social action.

61. According to the *Human Development Report 2004*, her country ranked in first place among Arab countries and 40th place among the 177 countries covered in the report. Her Government also had just drawn up a three-year strategy (2006-2009), to combat unemployment, a problem which affected a considerable number of young people.

62. **Mr. Butler** (Bahamas), speaking under agenda item 94, explained that his country was a transshipment point for illegal narcotics, bringing adverse effects, particularly violent crime, which cut short the potential and lives of young people. The fact that such activities were, moreover, associated with the illicit arms trade threatened his country's social and economic development and challenged young people's prospects of leading productive lives, as many believed that such activities were an easy alternative to hard work. One tool in the fight against illegal drugs was education. His Government was making every effort to give young people a quality education to enable them to take their rightful place in society.

63. HIV/AIDS, which posed a grave threat to human, social and economic development in his country, had had a major impact on young people. His Government had made strides in tackling the pandemic, particularly with respect to mother-to-child transmission. However, young people must also commit themselves to healthy lifestyles and thereby play their part in the fight to eradicate the disease.

64. Lastly, it was important for young people to be involved in planning and decision-making regarding issues that would affect their future, such as terrorism, poverty, armed conflict and HIV/AIDS.

65. **Mrs. Laohaphan** (Thailand), speaking under agenda items 93 and 94, said that her delegation associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Her country had achieved almost all of its targets under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and was now setting an MDG Plus target to bring the proportion of poor people in her country to below 4 per cent by 2009.

66. Her country's strategies had focused on partnership with concerned actors at all levels of society with the aim of eradicating poverty, reducing income disparities, creating employment and improving social protection and integration, in particular for the most vulnerable groups, thereby achieving a people-centred approach to development and empowering individuals. However, that very much depended on a stable and favourable international environment. Her country's efforts to contribute to the global development agenda were guided by the principle of self-help and partnership.

67. At the international level, there was an urgent need to better manage globalization and redress imbalances and inequities in order to provide assistance — primarily financial — to already marginalized countries that had been further weakened by internal conflicts, transnational problems, HIV/AIDS and/or natural disasters, and to help them achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

68. Young people were the key to development; her country was therefore implementing a 10-year Plan of Action on Youth (2002-2011).

69. With respect to older persons, an Act had been adopted in 2003 to guarantee their protection and welfare, a second National Plan on Older Persons was being implemented and the National Committee on Older Persons reported to the Government and made recommendations. Lastly, 13 April had been declared National Older Persons Day. However, account needed to be taken of the ageing of the population and its potential implications for development.

70. On the issue of persons with disabilities, a five-year national plan (2001-2006) had been implemented to improve their quality of life and, in cooperation with the Government of Japan, the Asia-Pacific Development Centre on Disability had been established to help develop their potential. Lastly, her Government had participated in drawing up an international convention on the protection of the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities.

71. **Mrs. Romulus** (Haiti), speaking under agenda item 94, endorsed the statement made by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The current socio-political crisis in her country — which had, in addition, been badly hit by flooding in the summer of 2004, costing the lives of around 3,000 people — had serious consequences for economic and social development. The interim Government had adopted a development strategy which took account of the interdependence between the

protection of human rights and democratization and was based on recovery and reconstruction policies. The interim cooperation framework also comprised a social development programme which aimed to improve housing, the economic integration of young people and the protection of women's rights, and to reduce unemployment. Considerable resources were required to reduce poverty, improve social integration and create productive employment. The latter was essential given that employment was a factor of equality and personal development.

72. Gender equality was also crucial because it helped to prevent crises. Women played a central role in Haitian society by ensuring the stability and education of new generations. The rights and needs of older persons and persons with disabilities were now better recognized and taken more into account. Lastly, literacy was essential if people were to exercise their civil and political freedoms and their economic, social and cultural rights.

73. **Mrs. Thandar** (Myanmar) said that her delegation associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Her country, which had just been elected a member of the Commission for Social Development, was committed to achieving the goals of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development. Social development and economic development should be intertwined; unfortunately that was not the case. In her country, the National Committee on Social Development placed great emphasis on alleviating poverty, creating productive employment and improving social integration. To that end, it organized seminars, conferences, workshops and training programmes, while its seven subcommittees were responsible for education, health, youth, disaster relief, HIV/AIDS, women's affairs and labour. Her Government's people-centred strategy aimed to alleviate and eventually eradicate poverty, particularly in the less developed border areas, where considerable sums had been invested in infrastructure development. Furthermore, in 2003, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Thailand and Myanmar had adopted the Bagan Declaration with a view to generating growth, increasing employment and reducing disparities in their border areas.

74. With regard to literacy, a 30-year National Education Development Plan aimed to achieve universal primary education through formal, non-formal and informal education. Her Government was also implementing a four-year Special Education Plan. A campaign to ensure that all children of school age enrolled in primary school had resulted in an enrolment rate of 95.05 per cent in 2004. In the past decade, the number of colleges and universities had increased from 32 to 154, while enrolment had risen from 120,000 to 890,000. The international community must support those countries with particular needs by providing the financial and technical assistance required to improve their literacy policies and programmes, and thereby help them to achieve the goals of the United Nations Literacy Decade.

75. **Ms. Bucknell** (Fiji), speaking under agenda item 94, thanked her Government for supporting youth policies and programmes and for having for the first time invited a youth representative to address the Third Committee. Since young people would eventually be holding posts of responsibility, their elders had to prepare them to inherit their roles. Policies and programmes must therefore be targeted to young adults and be responsive to their needs. Accordingly, her Government intended to adopt a national youth policy designed and driven primarily by young people and key stakeholders, aimed at providing an operational framework with achievable objectives. The success of any programme or framework also required monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in which, again, young people were involved.

76. It was important to acknowledge the great role that families played in nation-building, for parents were the first role models for young people.

77. Youth activism should aim to mobilize needed support for the elders in their communities, but should also be directed at ensuring that initiatives and programmes for young people enjoyed some degree of continuity.

78. One of the greatest difficulties experienced by the young people of developing nations like Fiji was in entering the labour market. While a youth employment policy had been adopted by her Government, there must also be the assurance that the policy instruments and programmes would be adequately funded.

79. **Mr. Koubaa** (Tunisia), after associating his delegation with the statement made by Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that his Government, taking the same position as the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization,

advocated globalization with a social or human face that met the aspirations and daily needs of individuals, communities and peoples. Rather than being a cause of dissension, globalization would then become a means to a more secure and just world, one less marked by exclusion, where prosperity would be better distributed. Tunisia's position on the matter of human development was based on the indissociability of the economic and social dimensions, and on solidarity, mutual assistance and national consensus; that was why it had proposed the establishment of a global solidarity fund that would embody the principle of shared responsibility

80. Tunisia was particularly interested in the implementation and monitoring of programmes for the disabled and was convinced that civil society and the non-governmental organizations in particular should be urged to take part in national and international efforts to encourage full participation by the disabled in social life and development.

81. **Mr. Belinga-Eboutou** (Cameroon) said that he would say only a few words to the Bureau and the Committee since he was speaking at the end of the general debate.

82. Cameroon, having held the Committee's chairmanship in 2003, had been able to appreciate the skill with which the Bureau worked within the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and had no doubt that it would build on what had been done. He assured it of his full cooperation.

83. He reminded the Committee that the peoples of the United Nations had proclaimed a little less than 60 years earlier their faith in basic human rights, the dignity and worth of the human person and the equal rights of men and women, and had declared their resolve to foster social progress and establish better living conditions and greater freedom for all peoples. The reminder was a way of underscoring the importance of the Third Committee as an essential link in the work being done by the United Nations to save future generations from the scourge of war. Among the Main Committees of the General Assembly, which generally focused on States and statistics, the Third Committee was one of the only ones whose thinking and decisions were centred on the human being, the individual human being whose rights must be guaranteed in order to avoid situations ending in conflict. Human rights were often seen as restricted solely to political rights, and yet the human being, as a single individual, could only have rights that were likewise indissociable. The tendency to reduce everything to political rights was responsible for the fact that human rights were often seen as means to an end, and that was also why the Committee, which sought better living conditions for all and should therefore work in harmony and by consensus, did not always manage to do so. Consequently, people, instead of uniting, and human rights, instead of being a force for unity, were divisive.

84. The Committee also needed to give more thought to how realistically to promote progress without the expectation that all should necessarily live alike, because although human beings were one with regard to their rights, they were diverse with regard to the conditions in which they developed. The constants were, nonetheless, that each person had the right to shelter, education and medical care. The Committee should therefore do everything possible to remain faithful to the spirit that presided over the establishment of the Organization and to the commitments that were clearly renewed in the Millennium Declaration. Cameroon, therefore, called on the Committee to place the individual human being at the heart of its deliberations.

85. **Mr. Husain** (Observer for the Organization of the Islamic Conference), referring to agenda item 94 (a), expressed his organization's fullest support for the initiatives by Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations relating to the observance of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family, and commended the Secretariat for the documentation provided, particularly the reports in documents A/59/176 and E/CN.5/2004/3. The Organization of the Islamic Conference also lauded the work done in that field by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, especially its United Nations Programme on the Family, with which his organization had had a fruitful working relationship for several years, even though it had not always agreed with its definition of the family. The statements of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan on that point echoed the collective concern of the member States of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, which they hoped the Committee would take into account in its current and future work. His organization believed that the natural family was the basic unit of society and should be strengthened. Qatar, as Chairman of the

Group of 77, had rightly emphasized the pressing need to preserve the family while preparing it for involvement in a rapidly changing society. Several other delegations, among them States which were members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, had advocated using the observance of the tenth anniversary as an opportunity to develop measures for reinforcing national and international institutions; the United States had drawn attention to the links between literacy and education, ageing and the family. In its statement to the Committee at the 2003 session, the Organization of the Islamic Conference had advocated the issuance of a declaration or a proclamation by heads of State and the establishment of national coordination mechanisms to harmonize policies and develop programmes in support of the family and to assist in mainstreaming family concerns in all national development efforts. It was therefore gratified to note that the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General (A/59/176, paras. 20 to 26) were along similar lines. It was convinced that the Secretariat had a crucial role to play in the mainstreaming efforts, which would require the strengthening of the United Nations Programme on the Family in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, whose coordinating role would be pivotal. The appointment of a new focal point on the family in the Division for Social Policy and Development was to be welcomed, and his organization looked forward to working as fruitfully with him as with his predecessor.

Statements in exercise of the right of reply

86. **Mr. Israeli** (Israel) said that the Syrian delegation had once again made hostile, aggressive and unfounded statements that were out of place in a forum such as the United Nations. It was regrettable that the Syrian Arab Republic had decided to criticize Israel in all international meetings, thus casting doubt on its call for peace. In actual fact, criticizing Israel and working for the adoption of resolutions lacking any objectivity that were directed against his country did not do anything to promote peace in the region.

87. **Ms. Al Haj Ali** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that in the eyes of international law, Israel was occupying a territory which was not its own, and that had dramatic consequences on the population of the occupied territory and represented a violation of its fundamental rights. Anyone seeking peace must act in a way that proved it; yet what was being witnessed, heard on television or read in United Nations documents refuted Israel's contentions. What would lead to peace would be the cessation of the occupation, the cessation of the sufferings of the population bent under the yoke of the occupation.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

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A/C.3/59/SR.6

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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 8 October 2004, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Kuchinsky .... (Ukraine)
later: Ms. Groux (Vice-Chairman) .... (Switzerland)

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* Items which the Committee has decided to consider together.

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 96: Crime prevention and criminal justice (A/59/77, A/59/123-E/2004/90, A/59/175, A/59/187, A/59/203, A/59/204, A/59/205, A/59/383-S/2004/758, A/C.3/59/L.3 and A/C.3/59/L.4)

Agenda item 97: International drug control (A/59/124-S/2004/532 and A/59/188)

1. **The Chairman** congratulated Wangari Maathai, from Kenya, who had been awarded the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize for her work within the Green Belt Movement in favour of the environment in Africa. He then offered his condolences to the families of the victims of the horrendous attacks that had occurred the previous day near the Egyptian border with Israel, which had killed dozens of people and injured more than 100 — mostly Israelis, but also Egyptians and other nationals. He trusted that the perpetrators of those acts would be brought to justice

2. **Mr. Costa** (Executive Director, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)), introducing the two agenda items, highlighted the importance of a common action uniting countries, their peoples and institutions, because organized crime and related offences had dire consequences for the mission of the United Nations and for all people as individuals or as representatives of a country or an organization. The globalization of organized crime rivalled the globalization of trade, finance and communications. In the same way as legitimate enterprises, criminal organizations had exploited the opening up of borders and the new technologies to extend their production and distribution networks throughout the world.

3. Through their many intermediaries, the major traffickers transferred their resources using the financial system or, when that was not possible, by exploiting the weaknesses of the system that controlled international trade. Currently, corruption cost societies a trillion dollars every year. Fraud and corruption, the most insidious and most destructive forms of criminal behaviour, destroyed national economies, undermined development and broke the bond of trust between citizens and Governments, and it was the poorest communities that were the principal victims. Further "collateral damage" related to corruption was linked to the fact that, at times, the authorities allowed terrorist or traffickers to act, with all the implied risks. The "dirty dollars" did not purchase infrastructure, food or capital investment; the product of crime financed terrorism and the luxurious lifestyles of traffickers, while ordinary people did not have the money for food, health care or education. "Dirty money" was reinvested in outwardly legitimate enterprises, in a grey zone where lawful activities mingled with heinous behaviour.

4. International peace could not be achieved, development could not be sustained and justice could not prevail if societies were contaminated by illicit activities; if the wealth of nations was siphoned off via fraud and corruption and if terrorists were permitted to "kidnap" national politics and if criminal organizations were allowed to jeopardize the future of today's youth, victims of societies that held out no hope. In his report on the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/59/282), the Secretary-General had noted the dangers that threatened not only peace and development, but also human rights, democracy and good governance.

5. Drug-trafficking imprisoned millions at both ends of the chain — farmers on the supply side and addicts on the demand side — and led to the misery of millions of persons, while ensuring a lavish lifestyle for the criminal intermediaries. With regard to human trafficking, far from having disappeared, slavery was alive and well in the twenty-first century. In 2004, 1 million persons, mainly women and children, would be victims of prostitution, pornography and other offences, whose perpetrators were totally devoid of human decency. Migrants seeking a better life were duped of their few possessions by traffickers, who in many cases abandoned them at sea or in a desert, condemning them to certain death. Unfortunately, unlike terrorism, human trafficking was a "silent crime" with no media coverage unless disaster struck. Yet the damage it caused was no less real than that inflicted by drug-trafficking, firearms-smuggling or terrorism. The latter was no longer national, but international. It no longer targeted the State and its representatives but rather individuals and civilians, and it did not respect any religion, or make any exception, while its ideological roots were much more complex than in the past.

6. Even though people might be aware of the threat that each of those crimes represented individually, they were perhaps oblivious to the danger that the crimes constituted collectively and through their interaction.

7. It was urgent to move from analysis to action and, to that end, the international community fortunately had several instruments that provided it with the force and legitimacy of international law: the three international drug control conventions; the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which had just entered into force, and its three supplementary instruments — the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Air and Sea, and the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, although the latter had not been ratified; the United Nations Convention against Corruption, signed by more than 110 countries; and the 12 international instruments on terrorism. Those texts gave States contractual obligations to work together and provided them with the conceptual and logistic support they needed to focus on prevention, which was always preferable to confronting a problem after the fact. That was encouraging, but much remained to be done. Many States had already allocated significant resources to law enforcement agencies to bolster security against organized crime. At the same time, States had an obligation and an opportunity to help those countries in need to reconstruct their civil societies in ways that made them less vulnerable to criminal exploitation or terrorist operations. Greater economic growth, expanded health care, improvements in education, and a culture that respected and valued individuals for their differences as well as for their strengths, were defences against criminal and terrorist operations.

8. UNODC was more than ever committed to playing its part in fighting organized crime in all its manifestations. In 2003 the Office had been reorganized and had presented a consolidated budget for 2004-2005. With a view to rationalization, it had initiated reforms in the areas of human resources, finances and information technology and had adopted new priorities with the focus on an integrated approach to drug trafficking and criminality as well as on prevention. It had also recently launched an integrity and transparency initiative and had submitted its contribution to the United Nations strategic framework for the period 2006-2007; its plan provided an integrated vision of its future direction, with clear lines of accountability for core aspects of its mission.

9. The research and analysis services of the Office had reported, in particular in the World Drug Report, on notable improvements in drug trends worldwide. The heroin market remained stable with a continued decline of cultivation and production in south-east Asia and the Andean nations which were traditional sources of heroin and cocaine, respectively. Afghanistan remained a source of concern and the most recent survey by the Office indicated negative trends. However, that country's counter-narcotics strategy still seemed valid; a time frame of 10 years to eliminate the problem still seemed to be appropriate and the determination of President Karzai was encouraging. The Office, which had a large portfolio of activities in Afghanistan, was also preparing new initiatives to strengthen capacities for investigation, prosecution and incarceration and to promote public awareness of the fact that opium was not an "El Dorado" but a national security threat. On the eve of the historic presidential election in Afghanistan, he called on all countries to support the Afghan Government's firm commitment to eliminating opium poppy cultivation.

10. The market for amphetamine-type stimulants had stabilized: production was not increasing around the globe as had been feared and fewer and fewer people from all demographic groups were buying such substances. If that trend were confirmed, it would represent a significant breakthrough in drug control. While cannabis accounted for much of the drug treatment demand in Africa (65 per cent), addiction to opioids remained the most serious problem worldwide. In Asia, for example, opioid addiction accounted for 67 per cent of the demand for drug treatment. Another troubling trend was the spread of HIV/AIDS through drug injection: 13 million intravenous drug users were concentrated in eastern and central Europe, and in south and south-east Asia, a continent that deserved particular attention. The Office would revisit those trends in the context of the work of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in March 2005, in the light of the goals established by the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem, held in 1998.

11. Returning to the available arsenal of legal instruments, he said that the legal experts of the Office were helping the countries interested in accelerating the ratification and implementation of the United Nations conventions against organized crime, corruption and terrorism.

12. Operationally, UNODC was implementing a range of global programmes and country projects, in particular in the fields of legislative assistance and capacity-building on drugs, crime and terrorism in the countries of west and central Asia, east Asia, the Andes, eastern Europe and Africa. Thanks to the donor community, new programmes had also been launched ranging from the creation of a regional information and coordination centre for central Asia to a container programme in major seaports in Africa, Asia and Latin America, which were often used as illicit trafficking hubs, in order to disrupt the flow of illicit commodities and undocumented aliens. The Paris Pact initiative had resulted in improved border control measures against heroin trafficking in central and west Asia, as well as in the Russian Federation and the Balkans. Lastly, the Global Programme against Terrorism was in its second year of implementation and the report submitted to the Committee (A/59/187) showed that the links between terrorism and other forms of crime were strong and deep. UNODC had provided training on the provisions of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) for more than 500 lawmakers and criminal justice officials from over 80 countries.

13. UNODC was currently operating with a budget of $100 million and 500 dedicated staff and was determined to increase its efforts to leverage its resources by inviting other institutions and major donor countries to increase their contributions since it could not hope on its own to overcome the evils it was combating. In April 2004, the Office had hosted the spring meeting of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) which had endorsed a plan of action on the role of the United Nations system in combating organized crime and corruption based on a UNODC concept paper containing a set of concrete actions. At the Global Compact Leaders Summit in June 2004, the chief executive officers of some 1,700 corporations had agreed to add anticorruption to its platform which already supported the protection of human rights, the elimination of child labour and the preservation of the environment. The Office was currently working on a strategic paper which would clarify the procedures for a partnership with businesses and other relevant organizations. Since 1 July 2004, UNODC had been chairing the UN/AIDS Committee of Co-sponsoring Organizations; it was continuing to support activities, in particular the WHO 3 by 5 initiative and the UNESCO initiative on prevention and education, and was working closely with its partners in addressing issues relating to the transmission of HIV/AIDS among intravenous drug users, especially users in prison, and other victims of drug trafficking and of human trafficking. 21 July 2004 had been an important day for UNODC: following a thorough process of consultation, it had concluded a new partnership with some of the major funding institutions of the world, in particular the World Bank, with a view to working together in several countries on themes such as money-laundering, terrorist financing, corruption, HIV/AIDS and alternative livelihoods. At the invitation of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, established by the Secretary-General, UNODC had provided an overview of its work which had led to a very productive discussion on the ways in which drugs, crime, corruption and terrorism undermined global action for peace and security.

14. In conclusion, he said that UNODC was attempting to reposition its action in ways that could shape the global agenda, in which context the involvement of so many partners and supporters in the fight against drugs, crime and terrorism was vital to its future. Its objective was to strengthen those partnerships in order to become a catalyst for the kind of change that was needed to build a world in which peace, security and justice were no longer the exception, but the rule.

15. **Ms. Faye** (Senegal), agreeing with the Executive Director that the fight against corruption required a great deal of effort and energy, pointed out that corruption particularly affected the developing countries where poverty was an aggravating factor. In Africa the same phenomenon also extended to the public sector and was constantly on the increase. Her delegation asked what action was envisaged by UNODC to combat and control the transfer of funds of unlawful origin and asked for some specific examples of the strategy in place. The Mexico Conference had ended with the adoption of the United Nations Convention against Corruption and it was now time to take action to ensure the entry into force of that instrument.

16. **Ms. Bakker** (Netherlands), recalling that combating terrorism was now an important component of crime prevention and criminal justice, asked how Mr. Costa saw the cooperation between his Office and the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) developing. She also wondered what steps the Office had taken to

encourage those countries that had not yet done so to sign, ratify or implement the 12 conventions and protocols on terrorism and how the Office cooperated with other United Nations bodies on the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Lastly, she asked what had been the impact of the measures taken by the Office in Central Asia to curb the trafficking of heroin produced in Afghanistan and what preventive and awareness-raising activities on HIV/AIDS were being carried out in Central Asia with drug addicts.

17. **Mr. Costa** (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime), replying to the questions put by the delegation of Senegal, referred to the provisions of the United Nations Convention against Corruption and the four principles on which it was based (prevention, criminalization, recovery of assets and legal assistance) and highlighted the stipulations on bank secrecy contained in the text. More than 110 countries had signed the Convention since its adoption, which gave cause for hope that it would be opened for ratification during the next 12 to 15 months. As to the concrete action taken, the Office was not simply awaiting the Convention's entry into force but had implemented the Global Programme against Corruption, under which a range of activities focusing on the implementation of the Convention had already been conducted. Such activities were provided for under articles 7 to 18 as preventive measures, and could commence without the entry into force of the Convention itself: selective screening and financial disclosure for public officials, establishment of official selection criteria and rules for tendering for and awarding construction contracts, and the drafting of guidelines for the funding of political parties and election candidates.

18. The representative of the Netherlands had been right to speak of a new division of labour arising out of the establishment of CTC. That Committee was responsible for identifying the areas where work was needed, while the necessary technical assistance was provided by the Terrorism Prevention Branch of his Office. In his view, that arrangement could be maintained in the future. He recalled that CTC was empowered to identify institutions around the world that could discharge the technical assistance programme equally effectively, since his Office could not do everything. Building on the experience gained following the adoption of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the Office could assist Governments in developing their own legislation after having ratified a convention; it would like to do the same in many other areas, including combating of money-laundering and sharing of information between institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Interpol, inter alia. CTC could motivate those institutions to become involved.

19. With regard to the steps taken to encourage countries to sign, ratify or implement the 12 conventions and protocols on terrorism, he said his Office had some 30 years' experience in that area. He wished to take the opportunity to remind members of the Third Committee that only 66 countries had ratified and implemented the 12 instruments; he hoped as many countries as possible would ratify them in order to prevent terrorists using some of them as a safe haven.

20. With regard to the protection of human rights, he acknowledged that many countries had confronted that problem in their efforts to combat terrorism. He had been in the habit of consulting the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, the late Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, on steps taken by the Office, until Mr. de Mello's tragic death. He was sure he would be able to do the same with the new United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and pointed out that successful action had been taken in Africa and Asia to combine counter-terrorist measures and the protection of human rights.

21. With regard to heroin from Afghanistan, everything possible was being done to curb trafficking between that country and the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Western Europe. It was no easy task, however, for the traffickers had opened new routes through Central Asia to the Russian Federation and other CIS countries. Increased opium production had generated additional revenues that were being used by the traffickers to find new routes. The Paris Pact was concerned with concrete measures with regard to borders and the relevant agencies, and with consideration of the initiatives taken in various countries to see whether they were effective. That was a long-term exercise and a process of learning by doing, and one that had shown not only that border guards were corrupt but also that institutions were not always effective. Corruption was the driving force behind trafficking and it had to be dealt with in order to put a stop to trafficking. The Paris Pact did not tackle that problem directly but

prompted countries to develop new initiatives in that regard.

22. The demand for drugs in Central Asia was indeed growing, since traffickers had found new markets there. At the same time, in the region and in some CIS countries, there had been a rise in cases of HIV/AIDS linked to intravenous drug injection. He thanked the Government of the Russian Federation for having agreed to host the next meeting of the Committee of Co-Sponsoring Organizations, at which the ministers of health, justice and the interior of the CIS countries would attempt to break the vicious circle of drug addiction and HIV/AIDS.

23. **Ms. Noman** (Yemen) asked what steps the Office was taking to deal with groups that used the proceeds of drug trafficking for political ends.

24. **Mr. Xie** Bohua (China) stressed the importance of international cooperation and asked whether UNODC cooperated with Interpol and, if so, in what areas.

25. **Mr. Costa** (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) said drug trafficking generated significant revenues worldwide and sometimes led to collusion at the political level, particularly on a regional scale, and with the private sector. Revenue from illegal activities was very often used to fund legal activities and the situation became far from clear. In many societies, corruption was a state of mind, which influenced behaviour not only among officials but also within the private sector. The courage had to be found to address that situation, not necessarily through law-enforcement measures, which were not always appropriate, but by creating civil society groups that would enable society as a whole to react and contain the consequences of drug trafficking and crime.

26. His Office did indeed cooperate with Interpol but, unlike Interpol, it was not a law-enforcement agency. It supported measures to contain both supply and demand. His Office met and consulted frequently with Interpol, particularly within the framework of the Paris Pact. Alongside Interpol's international action, his Office had established national drug control agencies in many countries, particularly in Central Asia and most recently in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan; others were soon to open in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. The scope of that work was specifically national but, with the support of Interpol, UNODC intended to create regional intelligence bureaux.

27. **Ms. Ahmed** (Sudan) reiterated her delegation's interest in UNODC's action and recalled the important meeting of the countries of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), held in Khartoum in January 2004. She asked what position the Office took on the legalization of certain narcotics, including cocaine, and in what way such legalization might affect its mandate.

28. **Ms. Abeysekera** (Sri Lanka) asked what was the position of the Office and of the international community concerning substitute crops in cannabis-growing areas.

29. **Mr. Reyes** (Cuba) asked what percentage of human and financial resources was devoted directly to repression programmes and prevention measures targeting young people, and to education. He also requested information as to the usefulness of unilateral "certificate of good conduct" measures in the context of multilateral cooperation. Lastly, he asked what was the Office's position concerning international military operations conducted unilaterally in the name of combating transnational crime, and whether such actions might in the long term prove counterproductive in terms of international cooperation in that field.

30. **Mr. Costa** (Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) recalled that the Office was endeavouring to boost its activities in Africa, which had often been neglected by the international community in relation to the fight against drugs, crime and terrorism. That was no doubt because Africa was less affected by drug addiction and trafficking, although the situation was changing. It would be a mistake to think that Africa needed no attention in that respect. The Office had launched an initiative which, he hoped, would lead to round-table discussions in the spring of 2005, and these should be favourable to appeals for contributions. The discussions would focus on crime, drugs and terrorism as major obstacles to development in Africa. As for the "legalization of drugs" mentioned by the representative of Sudan, it was more a gradual decriminalization of drug abuse in certain parts of the world, and in no case would it apply to trafficking. The Office believed that it might be an appropriate response to the problem; drug addicts were not criminals but people needing medical help and reintegration into society. While some countries, particularly in Europe, had been permissive in the past, they were now retreating from

that position and applying more repressive policies, while emphasizing medical treatment for drug addicts.

31. Responding to the representative of Sri Lanka, he said that while repression was indeed necessary, priority should be given to persuading farmers to grow alternative crops, rather than imprisoning them. Concerning cannabis, he cited the example of Morocco, the world's biggest producer, where the Office was endeavouring to promote development. It did not suffice to give seeds to farmers; they also must be trained in new activities and encouraged to set up production cooperatives, to show mutual solidarity and to engage in legal activities. They must also be provided with outlets for their production, including international outlets. The resulting value added would ensure that they had sufficient income so that they did not go back to illicit crops.

32. He regretted being unable to provide figures for the amounts spent on combating trafficking. For purposes of comparison, he recalled that $900 billion were spent worldwide on arms purchases every year, but only $60 billion were spent on development assistance, and only a third of that amount was devoted to the most needy population groups. More money was spent on repression than on controlling demand for drugs and preventing addiction. The Office was also endeavouring to make recommendations in the areas of prevention and therapy. As for the use of military operations to eliminate drug-producing crops, the Office had advocated such operations in Afghanistan, in agreement with the Security Council and the North Atlantic Council, since the current Government did not have the means to conduct the necessary operations.

33. **Mr. Mahtab** (India), noting that drug trafficking was now a source of income not only for criminals but also for terrorists, asked what measures were being taken to deal with the problem.

34. **Ms. Matos** (Venezuela) asked what financial mechanisms existed to help developing countries in their fight against drugs, and what mechanisms had been created by the Office, in the framework of shared responsibility among States, to reduce supply rather than demand.

35. **Mr. Iskandarov** (Azerbaijan) raised the issue of criminal organizations or separatist groups which took control of part of the territory of certain sovereign States following the collapse of the previous regime, as had been the case after the break-up of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, in order to engage in various criminal activities such as drug trafficking. He asked what measures were being taken by the Office to assess the operations and activities of such organizations or groups and their ability to use drug trafficking and other criminal activities to generate income, taking advantage of the fact that the territories under their control were not under that of the national authorities in the State concerned, or of the international community.

36. **Mr. Costa** (Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) said that a recent study on typologies of terrorist financing had shown that over the past 30 years, drug money had been used to finance all or part of the activities of terrorist groups. In Afghanistan, insurgent groups were financing their activities by means of income from heroin trafficking, and for every consignment of heroin leaving the country there was an incoming shipment of weapons. International cooperation was strong in relation to the surveillance of routes used by traffickers, but many countries remained silent.

37. Responding to the question from the delegation of Venezuela, he recalled that some 30 years previously, drugs had been produced in a certain number of developing countries and consumed in a group of developed countries. Production had since spread to rich, even very rich countries, in respect of both organic crops and synthetic drugs. Consumption was no longer limited to the rich countries; hence the notion of shared responsibility in the fight against drugs. The Office's budget was 90 per cent dependent on voluntary contributions; it therefore encouraged the partners of the developing countries to give them direct financial assistance or to provide contributions to the Office, which would then use them to help the countries concerned, which were divided into various categories. As for middle-income countries which had greater experience in combating drug trafficking, and which in some cases were members of the Security Council, permanent or otherwise, the Office was supplying them with advisory services and offering its know-how.

38. The Office shared the Azerbaijani delegation's concerns and acknowledged that criminals were often the first to profit from conflict within a country or region by engaging in trafficking of all kinds, especially if financial gain was involved, whether from oil or drugs. The Office was alarmed by this problem

and had sent a fact-finding mission to the region, referred to by the representative of Azerbaijan, to study possible measures for eradicating all the forms of trafficking that occurred there.

39. **Mr. Stelzer** (Austria) stressed the important standard-setting role of the Office in the negotiation of conventions such as the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the United Nations Convention against Corruption. He asked the Office what other measures and strategies it intended to adopt in an effort to combat human trafficking more effectively, since the war on the scourges of terrorism, corruption and drugs was too important to be lost.

40. **Mr. Costa** (Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) replied that the Office intended, in collaboration with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, to publish an annual report on trafficking in persons and referred to the existence of the Global Programme against Trafficking in Human Beings and of a Special Rapporteur on the question. In 2002, the Office had also launched a large-scale awareness campaign on the problem in the form of television spots aired across the world. However, that campaign necessitated a large financial effort on the part of the television networks, which were asked to donate airtime costing millions of dollars. The spots displayed toll-free numbers so that persons who knew of cases of trafficking in human beings or who were victims themselves could report them to the authorities. The Office was helping the authorities of some countries affected by the problem to amend their legislation, particularly for the protection of victims, many of them foreigners, and ensure that the victims were not considered clandestine and therefore expelled. It also helped victims return to their countries of origin by giving them a small subsidy to help bring some degree of normality back to their lives; it also offered a witness-protection programme for those willing to testify against the syndicates. However, those actions were but a part of larger-scale efforts. He called on all countries that had not yet done so to ratify the Additional Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, designed to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children.

41. **Mr. Thepkanjana** (Thailand) said that his Government, convinced of the importance of such congresses for international cooperation in the fight against crime, would shortly be hosting the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, which would take place in very favourable conditions, in view of the recent entry into force of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Additional Protocols to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, and against the smuggling of migrants by land, sea and air. In that connection, he was hopeful that the third additional protocol, against the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition, and the United Nations Convention against Corruption would soon enter into force and would buttress those other important instruments of international criminal law.

42. Technological advances enabled criminals to launder money, commit large-scale fraud and attack computer systems with impunity. The world was currently threatened by new, unimaginable forms of criminal behaviour, and organized crime had expanded to ever-wider areas and become more transnational in nature. Since 11 September 2001, those new forms of crime and the linkages among them and among their perpetrators had cast a cloak of fear over the world, with negative repercussions on economic and social development, and governments were being challenged to do more. The Eleventh Congress would provide the opportunity to draw on the lessons learned from achievements and from the deficiencies identified with regard to crime prevention and criminal justice. In that connection, he observed that the General Assembly had decided that each congress would adopt a single declaration containing recommendations derived from the deliberations of the high-level segment, the round tables and the workshops, to be submitted to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice for its consideration. Accordingly, given that the Commission, at its thirteenth session, had recommended the adoption by the General Assembly of a draft resolution acknowledging the relevance of the recommendations of the four regional preparatory meetings for the Eleventh Congress, Thailand had formulated a first draft of the Bangkok Declaration, which it hoped would reflect consensus among Member States and set clear, ambitious objectives, notably regarding the adoption of national crime-prevention and criminal-justice strategies, improved coordination of activities, and strengthened cooperation among governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and civil society.

43. Inviting all countries to attend the Eleventh Congress, his delegation emphasized the necessity of making further progress for an effective war on crime, so as to ensure that future generations lived in a better world.

44. **Mr. Srithirath** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that illicit drug production, trafficking and abuse, as well as other related crimes, including terrorism, corruption and human trafficking, threatened security, stability and development.

45. The National Strategy adopted in 2000 to eliminate opium from his country had yielded very significant results: between 1998 and 2004 nearly 75 per cent of opium poppy cultivation had been eliminated. In view of the needs of some 28,000 identified opium addicts, national production in 2004 was of little international significance. Those gains could be translated into significant cost savings in the law-enforcement outlays of countries to which those opiates were sent, in comparison with which the cost of sustaining alternative livelihoods was relatively small. Nonetheless, the assistance provided by the international community was insufficient for the development of suitable alternative activities, especially in countries like the Lao People's Democratic Republic, where opium was produced in isolated mountain regions populated mostly by ethnic groups.

46. Opium was produced in two thirds of the poorest districts, and in seven out of the ten priority poorest districts, in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Thus, assistance for alternative development was also assistance for poverty eradication and, by the same token, for the prevention of crime, including trafficking in human beings.

47. The rapid spread of amphetamine-type stimulants, especially among the young, was of grave concern. Data for 2004 showed that the Lao People's Democratic Republic was one of the main transit routes from a neighbouring country for that type of drug and for heroin. A national drug demand reduction strategy had been approved in 2003 and community-based approaches in prevention, treatment and rehabilitation had been initiated, but needed to be urgently extended and expanded.

48. Rates of HIV/AIDS and injection drug use were still low in the Lao People's Democratic Republic but, since the country was at high risk owing to the situation in the neighbouring countries, comprehensive initiatives were essential. With encouragement from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Government was ensuring that agencies dealing with drug abuse and HIV/AIDS worked closely together for greater synergies.

49. The Lao People's Democratic Republic had ratified the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and had requested the assistance of UNODC in the drafting of legislation and related implementation strategies. A nationwide precursor control action programme had been launched, the anti-money-laundering bill had been passed and bilateral, multilateral and regional cooperation agreements concluded in accordance with the goals set at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly.

50. Organized crime and terrorism respected no boundaries and constituted a global problem. Within the framework of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Lao People's Democratic Republic was a party to seven of the 12 instruments relating to terrorism and to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

51. Finally, donors were urged to provide technical support and funding for the organization of alternative activities, the lasting eradication of opium and the avoidance of problems having to do with illicit drugs HIV/AIDS, poverty, crime, human trafficking and corruption which threatened the Lao people and the region as a whole.

52. **Mr. Xie Bohua** (China) welcomed the entry into force of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime which China had ratified in 2003 with its two additional protocols. The Convention would encourage international cooperation in the fight against corruption. In that area, China had concluded many bilateral treaties on mutual legal assistance and stood prepared to cooperate further with the international community to secure the speedy entry into force of the United Nations Convention against Corruption. Nationally, legislative, judicial and legal measures had also been taken to create an enabling environment for fighting corruption with due respect for democratic principles.

53. After thanking UNODC for its contribution to China's efforts to control narcotics, he said that, in spite of the progress made since 1998, the situation

was far from satisfactory, as could be seen from the report of the Secretary-General (A/59/188). Narcotics production and trafficking were developing fast and new drugs were emerging on the market. The number of drug addicts remained high and they were bearing the brunt of the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

54. He also observed that drug trafficking was often linked to such forms of transnational crime as terrorism and money-laundering. All countries should, therefore, adhere to the principles of international solidarity and collective responsibility and cooperate in the fight against narcotics and related crimes and promote the search for substitution activities. In that regard, the developed countries should take measures to reduce demand and to provide financial and technical assistance to developing countries. The Government of China had formulated an inclusive and balanced national strategy for narcotics control and mobilized the whole of Chinese society in that struggle. Thanks to educational programmes and the promotion of substitution activities, the number of drug addicts had decreased and many communities had been freed from the scourge of narcotics, with a significant reduction in related crime. From 1998 to 2003, China had suppressed 546,000 drug-related crimes, arrested 250,000 traffickers, confiscated 51 tonnes of heroin, 52 tonnes of crystal methamphetamine, 14 tonnes of opium, and 1,412 tonnes of precursors and destroyed more than 500 acres of illicit opium poppy crops. Since 2000, the Government had instituted a policy which granted preferential access to the Chinese market for foreign substitution-activity products, which were exempted from customs duty amounting to US$ 2.4 million every year.

55. Internationally, China had actively participated in activities sponsored by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and other competent international organizations. It encouraged the development of regional machinery such as the cooperation arrangement with Burma, Laos and Thailand to address the problem of narcotics. China remained extremely concerned by the scope of the problem in Afghanistan and was participating in the relevant cooperation programmes. Among other examples, it had signed with six other countries the Kabul Declaration on Good Neighbourliness with respect to drugs control and concluded many bilateral cooperation agreements in that area.

56. *Ms. Groux (Switzerland) Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

57. **Mr. Mpundu** (Zambia), speaking on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), said that Madagascar, a SADC candidate country, associated itself with his statement. SADC was concerned by the growing global problems of international crime and the socio-economic effects of illicit drugs.

58. As indicated by the Secretary-General in his report (A/59/188), there were about 200 million drug users worldwide and, since 2002, over 60 per cent of countries surveyed were showing either no change or an increase in drug abuse. Transnational crime was becoming increasingly sophisticated, in particular cybercrime, challenging existing national, regional and global control measures. SADC welcomed the entry into force of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its two additional protocols and hailed the success of the first Conference of States Parties. It hoped that the third additional protocol, would soon also come into force. SADC had its own related protocol, which was already being applied after being signed and ratified by a majority of SADC member States.

59. SADC also welcomed the adoption of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, which it urged all Member States to sign and ratify. Again, SADC had its own anti-corruption protocol and had adopted a set of effective preventive and deterrent measures. The offer of technical support for the implementation of binding instruments was of crucial importance and his appreciation went to UNODC for the efforts it had been making since the previous session of the General Assembly with particular reference to legislative assistance, capacity-building and the adoption of a regional declaration and plan of action against human trafficking. In that regard, SADC urged the international community to support the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Fund.

60. Poverty and regional conflicts were making crime and drug control efforts much more complex and even more urgent, and care must be taken to adapt solutions to the specific circumstances of each country. SADC supported the work of the United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, which was experiencing financial difficulties and needed the assistance of the

international community. Welcoming the forthcoming Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, he concluded by stressing that the rule of law was a precondition for sustainable economic development.

61. **Ms. Bakker** (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the candidate countries Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey and Croatia, the stabilization and association and potential candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Serbia and Montenegro, as well as the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Space, associated themselves with her statement. The European Union gave priority to the fight against crime in all its forms, with respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and recalled that poverty, marginalization and inequity often bred crime. For that reason, the efforts being made by the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme to foster international cooperation in that area should be encouraged. In order to become an area of freedom, security and justice, the European Union had taken a series of initiatives to combat human trafficking and cybercrime, to confiscate the proceeds of crime and to institute new measures to enhance cooperation among police forces, customs and judicial authorities.

62. At the international level, the European Union welcomed the entry into force of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its two protocols and called on all States that had not yet done so to ratify those instruments, as well as the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition. The European Union had actively participated in the first Conference of Parties to the Convention and welcomed the adoption of its 2005 programme of work. It also called on all States that had not yet done so to sign and ratify the United Nations Convention against Corruption in order for it to enter into force as soon as possible, and was willing to assist States wishing assistance in that area.

63. The European Union welcomed the results of the thirteenth session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, which had outlined the importance of the link between the rule of law and development, and endorsed the programme of work adopted for the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. The single declaration to be adopted on that occasion should contain recommendations for consideration by the Commission and should address issues of global relevance in a concise and positive manner.

64. The European Union attached great importance to international and regional cooperation in the fight against terrorism and supported United Nations counter-terrorism activities, including those of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, the Al-Qaida and Taliban Sanctions Committee, and the Terrorism Prevention Branch of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). It strongly believed that resolution 1373 (2001) and the other pertinent Security Council resolutions, as well as the 12 United Nations conventions and protocols on terrorism played a central role. In that regard, the European Union observed that reservations about core articles diminished the effectiveness of those instruments. The European Union also supported the negotiations on the draft Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism and the adoption of the draft International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

65. In tackling the drug problem, it was necessary to adopt an integrated and balanced approach involving both supply and demand reduction and governmental and non-governmental actors. In that connection, the European Union commended the launching of the campaign entitled "Drugs: treatment works", on the occasion of the International Day against Drug Abuse and Drug Trafficking, and the launching of the *World Drug Report*. Demand reduction called for preventive action based on sound scientific evidence, improved availability of treatment and reduction of drug-related health and social consequences, including those relating to HIV/AIDS. In that regard, the European Union welcomed the efforts undertaken by the relevant United Nations organizations to study the effectiveness of drug-related HIV/AIDS prevention programmes and looked forward to a progress report on the problem at the next session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and to the setting of guidelines for pharmacological and psychosocial treatment of persons dependent on opioids. Accurate and comparable data were essential for setting up effective programmes; the European Union also welcomed UNODC efforts to establish key indicators. Concerned by the escalation of the problem of synthetic drugs, the demand for which was prevalent among young persons, the European Union welcomed

the UNODC publication entitled "*Ecstasy and Amphetamines: Global Survey 2003*" (United Nations publication, Sales No.: E.03.XI.15), which provided a first quantitative assessment of the extent of the problem. With regard to supply-reduction efforts, the issues identified at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly unfortunately remained highly relevant and the European Union was concerned about the connections between drug trafficking, organized crime and the financing of terrorism. It had therefore intensified its cooperation among Member States, but also with other countries and international organizations, as shown by the Framework decision on the European arrest warrant and the surrender procedures between the Member States and the cooperation agreement concluded between the European Police Office and UNODC.

66. Promotion of sustainable development played an essential role in the fight against drugs, especially in Afghanistan, and the European Union welcomed UNODC efforts in that field and subscribed to the principles laid down in the Berlin Declaration on Counter-Narcotics. The European Union supported the work of the International Narcotics Control Board to ensure compliance with existing treaties and to prevent the diversion of precursors, and stressed the need to make available the necessary financial resources for the Board to continue its work under Operation Purple, Operation Topaz and Operation Prism. For its part, the European Union had undertaken to formulate a new strategy in line with the principles set out at the twentieth special session, and firmly supported the work of UNODC. It welcomed the Office's new structure and its efforts for reform and results-based management made by the Executive Director.

67. Mr. Swe (Myanmar), citing the report of the Secretary-General (A/59/188), referred to the number of drug users worldwide and stressed that, while it was heartening that the *World Drug Report 2004* showed that drug use had slowed down significantly, 4.7 per cent of the most active and productive age group used drugs and that drug use clearly hindered development. The international community needed to redouble its efforts to achieve the goals set in the Political Declaration adopted at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly.

68. Myanmar supported the conclusions and recommendations of the Secretary-General and the catalytic role played by UNODC in mainstreaming drug-control issues by collecting relevant data and developing appropriate tools.

69. The *World Drug Report 2004* pointed out that in 2003 alone Myanmar had experienced a 24 per cent decline in opium production, which had fallen from 1,760 metric tons in 1996 to 810 metric tons in 2003, a trend that was expected to continue. In that regard, his country and the United States had been conducting joint annual opium-yield surveys, from which opium production in 2003 was estimated at no more than 483 metric tons. The figures from the tenth survey, conducted early in 2004, showed that poppy cultivation had declined by some 71 per cent between 1996 and 2003 and opium production by 81 per cent. Those significant results were due to the Government-formulated 15-year Narcotics Elimination Plan starting from fiscal year 1999-2000, and of which Myanmar had successfully implemented the first five-year phase through crop-substitution programmes implemented over the previous decade, development programmes providing alternative income for poppy growers, implementation of stringent money-laundering laws, seizure and destruction of drugs worth billions of dollars, anti-narcotic techniques training programmes, and cooperation with regional and international counter-narcotics agencies. The value of drugs seized and destroyed during the previous decade had been more than $14.452 million.

70. Statistics on tobacco smokers could not, however, be ignored, as the Executive Director of UNODC had pointed out; there were 1.3 billion smokers in the world, seven times the number of drug users, and tobacco claimed 25 times as many lives as drugs. Aware that the habit of drug addiction among young people often started with smoking, Myanmar had taken the proactive step of ratifying the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in April 2004.

71. Trafficking in persons was a very grave issue confronting the international community and one that Myanmar had tackled through a comprehensive framework comprising national legislation, a national plan of action, high-level commitment and bilateral, regional and international cooperation. Myanmar had acceded to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its two protocols and was engaged in drafting national legislation against human trafficking, in accordance with that Convention. In conclusion, he said that, in order to strengthen regional cooperation, Myanmar would be hosting the

six-nation Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking later that year and would continually enhance efforts to combat that crime.

72. In conclusion, he reiterated his Government's strong commitment to fighting the twin scourge of drugs and trafficking in persons and its willingness to cooperate with the international community.

73. **Mr. Farrar** (United States of America) said that his country was keenly aware that the subjects on the agenda ranked among the primary threats to international security and economic development. The interests of organized crime corrupted political institutions and were opposed to democratic accountability and the increasingly visible alliances between organized crime and terrorists constituted an immediate threat to the peace and safety of nations, to which it was essential to react quickly. The global economy could not meet the expectations of citizens if organized criminal activity continued to siphon off hundreds of billions of dollars annually. In a world more interconnected than ever, there was a diminishing margin of error in how one reacted to such transnational threats and the United States wished to assure other Member States that those issues ranked at the top of its foreign-policy priorities.

74. That commitment, he said, went beyond rhetoric. His country had assisted many other States, the United Nations and other international organizations in developing the capacities of criminal justice systems and law enforcement agencies through a broad array of technical assistance programmes. Since 2002, that assistance had totalled nearly $3 billion and the results obtained deserved to be mentioned, since they showed what mutual assistance could achieve.

75. In the western hemisphere, the countries of the Andean region had taken dramatic steps to reverse the vicious cycle of corruption and violence engendered by the international drug trade. In Colombia and other major drug-producing countries, the United States and the United Nations had assisted the authorities in eradicating coca and opium-poppy crops, with significant results. To the credit of the Colombian President and his Government, those crops had been reduced by one third over the previous two years, and that reduction would continue thanks to eradication operations and programmes to encourage alternative economic activities. He stressed that maintaining those achievements would require a sustained commitment on the part of the international community. His country reaffirmed its intention to continue to work with the Government and people of Colombia, who had suffered the consequences of drug-fuelled terrorism and aspired to a better future.

76. The United States was also committed to continuing its support to Colombia's neighbours and, being aware of the fragility of the success achieved, stressed the importance of efforts to lay the groundwork for a sustainable, regional, deep-seated and democratic solution to the destruction and terror connected with the drug trade.

77. That logic extended beyond the western hemisphere, and particularly to the situation in Afghanistan, where opium poppy cultivation compromised progress on economic and political reconstruction. On the eve of the presidential elections in Afghanistan, the United States would continue to work with the Afghan people to encourage the eradication of drug crops and support the development of alternative livelihoods. Past efforts had been too modest and the Government of the United States was working with its international partners, particularly the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, as leader in the development of drug-control policies, and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), towards achieving further results. The United States also supported Germany's efforts towards creating a professional and democratic police force to enhance security conditions on the ground, including through the construction and rehabilitation of Afghan police training facilities.

78. Meeting those challenges in Afghanistan was one of the highest priorities of the United States Government and the effort extended to Afghanistan's neighbours most directly affected by the production of and traffic in illicit drugs from that country. As in the Andean region, that traffic had to be approached from a regional perspective.

79. The United Nations had played a vital role in shepherding efforts to create an international legal regime to combat all forms of transnational organized crime, highlighted by two landmark conventions. After recalling briefly the objectives of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, he said that his country was pleased to offer its technical and financial support to UNODC in its efforts to promote internationally the ratification and

implementation of the Convention and its supplementary protocols.

80. Mr. Khalid (Pakistan) acknowledged that, in view of the multiple forms of crime, the political will and effective implementation of policies at the national level were just as important as international cooperation. Advances in communication technology and relaxed border controls, he said, were advantageous to organized crime. It was becoming increasingly difficult for States to deal with criminal activity that took place beyond their borders, yet adversely affected their interests. Hence the need for increased international cooperation.

81. The United Nations had a central role to play in that regard and the international instruments already adopted provided a sufficient legal basis for international activity under the Organization's guidance. Universal adherence to and faithful implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, its three protocols and the three conventions on drug control remained imperative for success against the twin menace of drugs and crime.

82. Pakistan commended the excellent work being done by UNODC on the ratification and implementation of the instruments dealing with the various facets of crime, particularly its programmes against money-laundering, corruption and trafficking in persons, and appreciated the work of its Terrorism Prevention Branch.

83. As a front-line State, Pakistan was an active partner in the fight against that scourge and had joined in the consensus that had led to the adoption of Security Council resolution 1556 (2004), thus expressing its firm determination to participate in the action taken by the international community. While States needed to focus on strengthening their national capacities for combating terrorism, the international community, too, must assist those that so needed in developing their legal systems and law enforcement structures. Pakistan hoped that the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice would provide opportunities to discuss those and other issues.

84. The tendency of major donors towards project-specific contributions impeded the independent functioning of UNODC and it was therefore important, in order to enable the Office to fulfil its mandate, to increase its share of the regular budget and to urge donors to contribute more towards general-purpose funds rather than dictating the operations of the Office in accordance with their own priorities or political considerations.

85. Combating money-laundering and criminal economy constituted a major element of strategies against organized crime. Member States must examine the desirability of a stand-alone instrument against money-laundering, negotiated under the aegis of the United Nations. Pakistan had actively participated in the negotiations on the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Convention against Corruption, to both of which it was a signatory, and had introduced a number of legal and administrative reforms in key areas to prevent and combat the activities covered by those conventions. In 2002 an ordinance for the prevention and control of trafficking in human beings was promulgated which provided severe penalties for the perpetrators of several possible forms of trafficking in persons. Hundreds of cases had been investigated and many had already been brought before the courts for trial. To prevent identity-document fraud, Pakistan was introducing new features in national identity cards and machine-readable passports. Keeping a database of returning migrants had been proposed to make it possible to carry out studies with a view to taking effective measures against criminal groups involved in trafficking in persons. The Federal Investigation Agency had embarked on a number of innovative projects that were already showing results, such as the Automated Fingerprint Identification System, the Cyber Crime Unit, the Anti-Money-Laundering Unit and the Special Investigation Unit. Pakistan had also taken steps to enhance international cooperation and mutual legal assistance through agreements with other countries, including extradition agreements. It was pursuing a two-pronged strategy for preventing corruption, based on comprehensive legislation and the introduction of corporate management structures in major public-sector organizations. Thus, the National Accountability Bureau had been successful in reducing corruption within the country and had recovered over 160 billion rupees.

86. The Pakistani delegation remained convinced that despite unquestionable difficulties, political resolve at the national level and cooperation at the international level would permit positive results in the fight against

the drug problem. His country was playing a leading role in sensitizing the international community and had succeeded in eliminating illicit crops through a combination of law enforcement and alternative development initiatives. At the same time, Pakistan had been actively contributing to international efforts to stop the outflow of drugs from Afghanistan and the inflow of precursor chemicals, in order to prevent drug production.

87. While there were reasons to be optimistic, one had to be mindful of new patterns and trends, which necessitated timely action to guarantee the success of strategies against the world drug problem. Special attention must be devoted to the increase in illicit production, trafficking and abuse of synthetic drugs and their precursors. A sustained and multi-pronged national and international strategy must be the cornerstone of the fight against drugs and required addressing related menaces such as terrorism, money-laundering and violent crimes. To achieve those goals, Pakistan remained committed to forging effective international partnerships.

88. **Ms. Feller** (Mexico), reaffirming her country's firm adherence to international action, said that Mexico sought to promote the application of additional measures aimed at the implementation of plans of action adopted at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly and also supported the application of the Joint Ministerial Statement adopted by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its forty-sixth session, the tenor of which she recalled. Mexico devoted sizeable resources to fighting traffic in and the production and abuse of illicit drugs and the related crimes, such as money-laundering, smuggling, corruption, the arms trade and traffic in immigrants — resources that could be used to finance other development strategies.

89. The policies followed covered a variety of fields, such as scientific investigation, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation, as well as air, sea and land interception strategies. However, national efforts to combat drug traffic and other forms of criminal activity could bear fruit only if accompanied by concrete international measures. It was therefore essential for countries to remain faithful to the agreements connected with the action plan for the implementation of the political declaration and to institute stronger measures, taking into account the priorities set for 2008.

90. The Mexican delegation felt that the efforts of the international community should include public policies aimed at reducing and preventing not only demand, but also the street trade, which affected the population directly. Given the increase in the traffic in and consumption of amphetamines and their precursors, it was of paramount importance to develop measures for the detection and destruction of clandestine laboratories, including the detection of the manufacturing methods used.

91. Mexico reaffirmed its support for UNODC and the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) and their action against the global drug problem and was convinced that it was essential to continue to strengthen them, evincing the necessary political will to apply the measures and programmes emanating from them.

92. As in the past, Mexico would introduce in the Third Committee a draft resolution on international cooperation against the global drug problem based on an equitable and balanced approach, the principle of shared responsibility and respect for State sovereignty. It hoped to be able to count again on the support of other delegations in maintaining the full force and utility of the text.

93. Mexico had participated actively in the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and welcomed the establishment of the multi-year programme, in which specific issues connected with the Convention and the two protocols in force could be considered. It hoped that the second conference, to be held in 2005, would provide an opportunity for a more in-depth analysis and consideration of the follow-up mechanism of the Convention.

94. The speaker announced in conclusion that on 20 June 2004 her Government had deposited with the Secretary-General Mexico's instrument of ratification of the United Nations Convention against Corruption. Mexico appealed to States that had not already done so to sign or ratify the landmark Convention in order that it might enter into force as soon as possible.

95. **Mr. Bâzel** (Afghanistan) expressed his country's thanks to UNODC and its Executive Director for their active involvement in assisting the Government in formulating policies, establishing institutions, strengthening the law-enforcement and criminal justice systems and promoting alternative means of livelihood.

He pointed out that the Executive Director had visited Afghanistan several times to galvanize the anti-narcotic effort and find ways to strengthen regional cooperation in that field.

96. It was unfortunate that Afghanistan was one of the major producers of narcotics and that the production of amphetamine-type stimulants and synthetic drugs in other parts of the world was increasing. The destruction of the country's economic and agricultural structure and the collapse of State institutions after more than two decades of foreign aggression and conflict were the principal causes of the opium-production problem, which the Afghan Government could not tackle alone. The speaker recalled that it had been recognized by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session that the drug problem was a world problem. The responsibility for fighting it was shared, requiring an integrated and balanced approach in which demand reduction must be given as much importance as supply. Strong measures by the countries concerned to reduce the demand would contribute to a reduction of supply in the opiate-producing countries, but if the demand increased or remained unchanged, the supply of narcotics would continue, either from Afghanistan or from elsewhere.

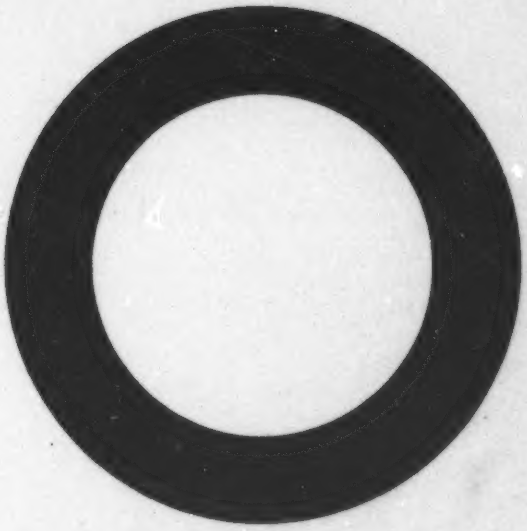
97. His delegation wished to emphasize three important aspects of the drug problem in Afghanistan, the first of which was the Government's political will to combat the production, trafficking, processing and consumption of narcotics, as evidenced by the issuance over the previous two and one-half years of presidential decrees banning the cultivation and export of opium. Afghanistan, being cognizant of the link between drug trafficking, transnational organized crime and terrorist activities, considered the fight against the drug trade a national security question. The speaker said that the office of the National Security Advisor was supervising the National Drug Control Strategy signed by the President in May 2003 and that article 7 of the Afghan Constitution stipulated that narcotics production and traffic were prohibited. The Afghan Government was participating in regional efforts to strengthen coordination and cooperation. It had hosted the International Counter-Narcotic Conference on Afghanistan in February 2004 and had signed, together with its six neighbours, the Berlin Declaration on Counter-Narcotics within the framework of the Kabul Good Neighbourly Relations Declaration.

98. The second aspect related to the importance of re-establishing institutions and law-enforcement centres throughout the country. In that connection, Afghanistan was thankful to the Governments of the United Kingdom, the United States, Germany and Italy for their much-needed support. That contribution was already bearing fruit, inasmuch as Afghanistan had established counter-narcotics institutions and adopted relevant laws; moreover, a counter-narcotics police force was being established and had been active in different parts of the country, confiscating poppy fields and destroying heroine laboratories. As reported by the Afghan Ministry of the Interior on 29 September 2004, the special police force had launched successful operations in Nangarhar province, during which some 61 tons of narcotics and chemicals used in producing heroin and 47 heroin-producing laboratories had been destroyed. The activities of traffickers had thus been thwarted and drug prices had consequently fallen.

99. The third aspect to be emphasized related to the link between poverty and drug-crop cultivation, as acknowledged by General Assembly resolution 53/115, and to the distinction that must be made between the needs of poor farmers suffering the effects of war and drought, on the one hand, and the greed of the drug mafia that profited from that lucrative illicit business, on the other hand.

100. After decades of wars of aggression and conflict, Afghanistan was left with one of the highest rates of poverty in its history and was in need of international assistance to tackle the country's drug problem. As shown in the case of other countries, in order to yield effective results such assistance must be long-term.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.



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Chairman: Mr. Kuchinsky.. (Ukraine)
later: Ms. Groux (Vice-Chairman).. (Switzerland)

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* Items which the Committee has decided to consider together.

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 94: Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*)

(b) United Nations Literacy Decade: education for all (*continued*) (A/C.3/59/L.15)

1. **Mr. Gansukh** (Mongolia) introduced draft resolution A/C.3/59/L.15 entitled "United Nations Literacy Decade: education for all" and announced that Suriname and Venezuela had joined the sponsors. Informal consultations on the draft resolution had been requested.

Agenda item 96: Crime prevention and criminal justice (*continued*) (A/59/77, A/59/123-E/2004/90, A/59/175, 187, 203, 204, 205 and A/59/383-S/2004/758; A/C.3/59/L.3-L.9)

Agenda item 97: International drug control (*continued*) (A/59/124-S/2004/532 and A/59/188)

2. **Mr. Barriga** (Liechtenstein) said that multilateral action was indispensable in coping with the challenges of terrorism, transnational organized crime, trafficking, smuggling of migrants, corruption and money-laundering. The machinery established by the United Nations system in recent years to counter those scourges was impressive. Liechtenstein had signed the United Nations Convention against Corruption (General Assembly resolution 58/4, annex) and the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (General resolution 55/25, annex), and had ratified all the conventions and protocols in the area of counter-terrorism.

3. Standard-setting in crime prevention and criminal justice depended on effective national implementation and cooperation between States. His Government was willing to assist other States with capacity-building, particularly in the area of modernizing legislation on the suppression of the financing of terrorism and money-laundering. It was planning to host with UNDP a conference on strengthening international cooperation in combating financial crime, which would provide an opportunity for judges, prosecutors and other officials to exchange experiences and best practices.

4. As part of the continuing efforts to restructure and strengthen the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), his Government had supported the Global Programme against Money-Laundering and had assisted in supporting the development of financial-intelligence units in smaller financial centres.

5. The importance of the rule of law in combating crime could not be stressed enough, and his delegation welcomed the emphasis on that theme at the current session of the General Assembly. There would be no short-term or long-term gain to be had from ignoring the rule of law.

6. With regard to international drug control, the task of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and UNODC was becoming increasingly difficult, as efforts to reduce demand and supply of illicit drugs remained far from satisfactory. More international cooperation and donor support was needed, especially in those parts of the world where illicit drug production was linked to security threats.

7. **Mr. Neil** (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that globalization, with all its promise of increased prosperity, also had a dark side manifested in the development of linkages and the transfer of criminal activity across borders in the form of multinational crime syndicates. Their impact on social, economic and political life, particularly in developing countries, was overwhelming. The United Nations had risen to the challenge of establishing international legal frameworks and support to national efforts to tackle the problem. Some 147 countries had become parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and the United Nations Convention against Corruption had just been adopted.

8. CARICOM welcomed the recommendations in the report of the Secretary-General on the strengthening of the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme, in particular its technical cooperation capacity (A/59/205). Technical assistance for the prevention of terrorism had expanded considerably during the period under review, but that expansion should not be at the expense of the critical area of strengthening the capacity of law-enforcement mechanisms.

9. The illicit drug trade threatened to reverse years of effort to build fragile economies and move towards sustainable development. A clear link had been

established between the illicit trade in narcotic drugs and increased use of small arms. The Caribbean region was a trans-shipment point between the large drug producers and the lucrative markets of the United States and Europe, which had a negative impact on its economic development. Given the profits to be gained from such activity, dealers invested heavily in protecting the trade, causing a rise in violence and presenting real challenges to law enforcement. CARICOM called for international assistance to transit States to enhance interdiction efforts, along with a more balanced approach to reductions in demand and supply. A serious political commitment to implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the adoption of an international convention were also needed.

10. Concerted action against the world drug problem and transnational organized crime could help to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and create an environment of peace and sustainable development for future generations.

11. **Ms. Chassoul** (Costa Rica) said that the globalization of crime required a global response. Regional agreements to address the challenges of organized crime, such as those recently signed by CARICOM, were also extremely important in enhancing capacity and strengthening partnerships.

12. Terrorism, a major threat faced by the current generation, could not be justified in any way. While honouring its victims and reiterating the strong commitment to bring its perpetrators to justice, however, world leaders were also committed to upholding democratic values, defending human rights and promoting a multilateral approach with full respect for international law in their efforts to combat it. The United Nations should lead the effort in the fight against international terrorism. It must maximize its limited resources by avoiding overlapping. The events of 11 September 2001 were not isolated actions, and many others had died since then. The fight against terrorism and its root causes must become a permanent activity of the United Nations.

13. The Government of Costa Rica was suggesting that the General Assembly should begin an in-depth review of the various United Nations mandates and bodies dealing with terrorism, with the aim of eliminating duplication, unifying resources and centralizing decision-making in the hands of a professional, permanent and impartial body within the Organization, through the establishment of a United Nations High Commissioner on Terrorism (A/59/383-S/2004/758).

14. There was a common threat, to which there must be a common answer. Her delegation welcomed all ideas and proposals aimed at the construction of such an institution.

15. **Mr. Alimov** (Tajikistan), speaking on behalf of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), said that the urgency and scope of the problems associated with illicit drug trafficking clearly illustrated the global nature of the threat to international stability and security. Although Tajikistan did not produce any narcotics, it was located between the world's leading producer of opium and heroin and the drug-consuming countries. His Government was determined to halt the transit of narcotics through Tajikistan. In recent years it had taken a number of measures aimed at improving the control of drugs, adopted a legislative framework in line with international norms, and strengthened the capacities of law-enforcement bodies. Moreover, in 1999 it had set up the Presidential Drug Control Agency, with the assistance of the United Nations. As a result of those various measures, Tajikistan ranked among the world's five leading countries in terms of the amount of drugs confiscated, and the number of drug-related crimes committed in Tajikistan had fallen. However, it remained vital to strengthen collective efforts to combat the threat of drugs, enhance cooperation, and continue to improve working methods.

16. Because Afghanistan had long been one of the world's major drug-producing centres, the drugs trade had rapidly established itself as part of Central Asia's "shadow economy". Therefore, in accordance with the principles of the Political Declaration adopted at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, the international community should give Afghanistan the maximum possible support and assistance in its efforts to deal with the drug problem.

17. **Mr. Baali** (Algeria) said that the international community must demonstrate a firm and unequivocal commitment to tackle the link between illicit drug trafficking, terrorism and other crime. As the Secretary-General had recalled in his report on

international cooperation against the world drug problem (A/59/188), States had made a commitment, through the Political Declaration adopted at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, to achieve significant progress in the reduction of illicit drug supply and demand by the year 2008. However, as UNODC noted in Volume 1 of its *World Drug Report 2004*, the results achieved thus far were mixed. The fact that Algeria was a transit region for drugs and also lay close to the centres of drug production was not without consequences for its people. The trafficking in, and increased use of, narcotics and psychotropic substances was a matter of great concern to the authorities which, in recent years, had been striving to provide the resources, and take the measures needed to combat the problem.

18. However, domestic efforts alone would not suffice. As the Secretary-General had noted in his report on international cooperation in the fight against transnational organized crime (A/59/204) and his report on strengthening international cooperation and technical assistance in preventing and combating terrorism (A/59/187), international cooperation was more important than ever to combating organized crime, and was essential to the fight against terrorism.

19. Algeria had itself suffered grievously from terrorism over the past decade, and had always advocated a concerted approach, having ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its three protocols. Furthermore, his delegation endorsed the recommendation made by the Secretary-General in document A/59/187 on the need to reaffirm the importance of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme, and of the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice scheduled for April 2005. The precarious financial situation of the African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders was a matter of great concern, and required urgent action by Member States, and Algeria was determined to play its part.

20. Mr. Lee Chul (Republic of Korea) said that transnational organized crime continued to expand, threatening the very fabric of societies and causing untold suffering to vulnerable groups. The entry into force of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and two of its protocols was therefore very welcome, and his delegation urged the Secretariat to strengthen its efforts to promote ratification and implementation of the Convention. For its part, the Republic of Korea was currently amending its laws to bring them into line with the Convention, and hoped to ratify it shortly. Because crime was closely tied to peace and security, human rights, democracy and good governance, his delegation welcomed the agreement reached by the United Nations system's Chief Executives Board to build an effective inter-agency response to curbing transnational organized crime.

21. With respect to combating terrorism, he noted that a sustained global commitment and a comprehensive set of actions were required, at both the domestic and international levels, and that the universal implementation of the 12 major conventions and protocols related to terrorism, and their full implementation, were also essential. His Government had recently enacted two laws on the prevention and punishment of human trafficking and the protection of its victims, and had also taken an active part in the Bali process to discuss solutions to human trafficking and the closely related issue of illegal immigration. Corruption was a global threat, hampering States' efforts to achieve justice, social development and the rule of law. The 2003 United Nations Convention against Corruption was a major achievement. His delegation hoped that it would enter into force as soon as possible, and wished to reiterate the importance of participation by civil society and the private sector in efforts to combat corruption. His delegation also attached great importance to the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, to be held in 2005, and hoped that the Congress would help build momentum for renewing political commitment and strengthening international cooperation in that area.

22. With regard to international drug control, his delegation noted with profound concern that amphetamine-type stimulants were the second most widely used substance, and that their use had recently increased in all regions of the world. The Republic of Korea had virtually eliminated domestic manufacturing and trafficking of such stimulants, but it was alarmed by the increase in their use in the South-East Asia, East Asia and Pacific region. It therefore welcomed the continued efforts of UNODC to encourage cooperation in efforts to combat synthetic drugs. Protecting young people from illicit drug use was a crucial part of

demand reduction, and his Government was taking various measures in that regard.

23. As illicit drug-related transactions became more international in nature, building cooperative relationships among the law-enforcement agencies and judicial authorities of the countries concerned became increasingly important. Through international cooperation, his Government had achieved notable successes in punishing illicit drug producers and traffickers. At the regional level, it annually hosted the Anti-Drug Liaison Officials Meeting for International Cooperation, which enabled countries to exchange information on illicit drug control practices. Protecting financial systems from money-laundering was another key element of the fight against the production of, and trafficking in, illicit drugs. His delegation noted with concern the increasing use of drug trafficking proceeds to finance terrorist activities, and welcomed the efforts of UNODC to promote anti-money-laundering legislation.

24. **Ms. Chan** (Singapore) observed that the drug trade spanned the whole world, by way of a global supply chain, and there were now fewer natural barriers to the movement of drugs across borders. Properly enforced drug laws and effective, efficient transnational cooperation and coordination among drug and law-enforcement agencies of every Member State were therefore essential. Adequate resources and political will were also required, in order to ensure concrete action and sustainable results. Halting the supply of illicit drugs required not only arresting the traffickers, dealers and couriers, but also tracking down and bringing to justice the masterminds and organizations running drug-production networks. In order to ensure the long-term sustainability of drug-control measures, farmers must be provided with feasible alternatives to drug production. Furthermore, it was essential not to neglect the security-related aspects, because instability and conflict provided fertile ground for the production, trafficking and abuse of drugs.

25. In order to reduce demand, people — particularly those at risk — must be educated, and those who abused drugs must receive rehabilitation. Other major factors that must be addressed included corruption, money-laundering, the spread of blood-borne diseases such as HIV/AIDS and the financing of terrorist groups. Singapore's domestic drug strategy focused on cutting demand and supply, through legislation, vigorous law enforcement, rehabilitation and education. At the regional level, her country's drug-enforcement agency worked closely with its counterparts in other countries to penetrate and destroy international drug syndicates. There was no drug production in Singapore, and the number of drug users had fallen by 70 per cent over the past decade. It was a party to all three major international drug-control treaties and was on course to meet the goals set out in the Political Declaration adopted at the twentieth special session.

26. **Mr. Reyes Rodríguez** (Cuba) said that the doctrines imposed by the world's leading imperialist Powers had led to an increase in global crime. Member States should not deceive themselves that the battle against crime was being won, because they lacked the capacity to address the root causes of domestic and international crime, and the imperialist Powers had shirked their responsibilities in that regard.

27. However, his country believed that progress was possible, and wished to suggest a number of approaches. It was necessary to set up domestic and international systems that gave priority to comprehensive education, free of discrimination. The principle of the shared responsibility of all States to confront the problem of transnational crime, in accordance with international law and the principles of the Charter, should be made a reality. The necessary financial and human-literacy programmes should be provided for massive literacy programmes, by reducing military spending by the big industrial nations or imposing taxes on speculative financial transactions. Ambitious job-creation programmes should be implemented, particularly for youth. In that regard, a significant contribution could be made by developing and improving basic social services. The practice of awarding most-favoured-nation status on a unilateral basis should be brought to an end, as it merely served as a pretext for imposing politically motivated enforcement measures against developing countries. Attempts to transform national armies into the protectors of transnational capital efforts should be halted. The exercise of terror through power, and the threat and use of force on the basis of unquestioned military superiority, should be halted, as should the use of illegal doctrines such as the supposed right to take pre-emptive action. War was no way to eradicate poverty, inequality, injustice, hunger, corruption and terrorism.

28. Lastly, it was necessary to promote universal ratification and implementation, without discrimination, of major international instruments on terrorism, international drug control, transnational organized crime, trafficking in persons, corruption and illegal trafficking in migrants.

29. Despite having had to endure, for over four decades, the criminal embargo imposed by the United States Government, Cuba was proud of its many achievements in the areas of crime prevention, criminal justice and the struggle against the global drug problem. Domestically, Cuba was engaged in a profound social revolution, focused in particular on improving the comprehensive education of children and the population as a whole, as the cornerstone of crime prevention. At the global level, it had given ample proof of its commitment to international cooperation in the struggle against transnational crime and the drug problem, participating in the various international forums and the related multilateral mechanisms. Moreover, it had repeatedly expressed its willingness to cooperate with the United States, but its proposals had been rejected. Despite the embargo, and the hostility and continued aggression endured by the Cuban people as a result of the United States Government's imperialist policy, Cuba would make every effort to ensure that its territory was not used to carry out criminal actions against Americans or against any other peoples of the world.

30. **Mr. Gzllal** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that, as reflected in the Secretary-General's report, the international community had made some progress in recent years in combating the scourge of drug abuse. Yet in some parts of the world, demand had increased and the problem continued to present a challenge for the international community. Efforts to fulfil the commitments made at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly must be intensified.

31. Libya was not a drug-producing country and indeed had little experience of the problem. Given its geographical and strategic position between three continents where producer and consumer countries existed, however, it must work to ensure it did not become a transit zone. It had made efforts at all levels to implement the international instruments to which it was a party, not least by adopting legislation imposing harsh punishments for drugs-related crimes, which in many cases overlapped with other forms of transnational organized crime.

32. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya took note of the Secretary-General's report on the African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (A/59/175). It had made its contribution to the Institute and hoped other countries would do likewise. His delegation requested the Secretary-General to work towards ensuring the Institute obtained the financial and technical assistance it required.

33. The 2003 United Nations Convention against Corruption was the first international instrument to combat corruption. Like crime, however, corruption knew no borders and was a threat to economic activity and development, and a more coordinated approach needed to be taken by policy makers and decision makers if it was to be rooted out.

34. His delegation took the view that State terrorism was a type of organized crime. Its root causes, however, could not be dealt with if it was not clearly defined. Its eradication required the elimination of double standards: it should not be condemned when committed by one State against another but condoned when committed by the other State. It should not be associated with any particular religion or culture, and his delegation could not accept that a people's struggle against occupation should be equated with terrorism. He called for an international conference to be held on the subject.

35. **Mr. Rastam** (Malaysia), speaking on behalf of the member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that, since 1997, ASEAN had instituted various regional mechanisms to combat transnational crime. It was committed to strengthening regional and international cooperation, notably through the activities of its Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime in implementation of the ASEAN Plan of Action to Combat Transnational Crime in several specific areas, including information exchange; cooperation and law enforcement, law and legal matters; and training and capacity-building.

36. ASEAN was taking a comprehensive and coordinated approach to transnational crime with links to terrorism and, as part of efforts to prevent and suppress the funding of terrorism, sought to enhance the flow of information and intelligence on terrorist organizations.

37. ASEAN had consistently supported the United Nations in its leading role in countering international

terrorism. The Association's members were encouraged to sign all relevant conventions and the possibility of drafting a regional convention to combat terrorism was being investigated.

38. ASEAN was committed to the eradication of the production, processing, trafficking and abuse of illicit drugs in South-East Asia by 2015 and was working closely with its dialogue partners, the United Nations and other regional and non-governmental organizations to combat the drug menace in the region.

39. **Ms. Ito** (Japan) said Japan condemned all forms of terrorism and, following the recent heinous attack on innocent victims in Beslan, Russian Federation, urged all Member States to become parties to the relevant international instruments as a matter of urgency. It hoped the Terrorism Prevention Branch of UNODC would continue to cooperate with other relevant United Nations bodies in providing legal assistance to Member States in that area.

40. Her Government was determined to strengthen its policy on human trafficking, one of the most serious of transnational crimes and one that violated the fundamental human rights of its victims. Cooperation between source, transit and destination countries was essential, however; her Government was already making great efforts to promote such cooperation at all levels and hoped that UNODC and other international organizations would contribute as well.

41. Japan considered that demand reduction had an important part to play in drug control and hoped that the provision of effective treatment for users would result in a substantial drop in consumption. Japan was a major contributor to a UNODC demand-reduction project in Afghanistan, a country where the drug problem was of considerable concern to the international community because of its role in financing terrorism. As to the "harm-reduction" approach favoured by some countries, Japan believed it might in fact encourage further drug abuse and undermine international efforts to combat the problem.

42. The abuse of synthetic drugs was an increasing problem because of the ease with which such drugs could be produced. Reduction in supply depended to a very large extent on precursor control and Japan therefore welcomed the initiative of the International Narcotics Control Board in that regard.

43. **Mr. Cuenco** (Philippines) said the rampaging criminality that had proliferated unchecked for many years had become the most devastating problem the world faced. Crime networks expanded across the world by the same means that propelled economic globalization, but their activities destabilized society and undermined development and poverty-eradication measures.

44. His own Government, in its efforts to promote domestic security, had found that the involvement of ordinary citizens was often a vital element in the war on crime. At a higher level, and with support from the international community, the armed forces and police had been undergoing modernization in order to improve their response to criminal threats; the Philippines also continued to cooperate with its neighbours in the ASEAN region in their efforts to combat transnational crime.

45. Given the profound impact of drug abuse and trafficking on human health and sustainable development, and the drugs-crime-terrorism nexus, national and global efforts must address the problem in a more integrated manner. The approach adopted in the Philippines tackled both supply and demand and included a development and reform package, a people-empowerment campaign and enhanced coordination with other countries and international drug-control agencies.

46. Despite the commitments of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, drug cultivation and use continued to expand. The talking had gone on long enough; a change of strategy was required. The Philippines proposed that a new multilateral extradition treaty should be drafted under United Nations auspices in order to make it possible for international narcotics criminals to be returned to their own countries for trial and conviction.

47. **Mr. Israeli** (Israel) said that, as a party to the major conventions on narcotics, Israel had put in place legislation allowing the seizure of assets acquired through drug trafficking and the monitoring of suspicious banking and financial transactions and money-laundering. It had also established a statutory corporation directly responsible to the Prime Minister — the Israeli Anti-Drug Authority — which had developed a network of services to combat drug abuse by tackling both supply and demand.

48. The Authority's main targets for 2004 were to change the public atmosphere regarding drug usage; to implement prevention and/or rehabilitation programmes for target groups including parents, workers, young people and immigrants; and to include the drug issue in basic training for selected professional groups.

49. Both the Government and the Authority were cooperating in efforts at the regional and international levels to link the fight against drugs with the issues of terrorism, crime and corruption, and, through bilateral agreements in particular, to exchange information and expertise with other nations. Only through such cooperation and by ensuring that international instruments were applied could the scourge of drugs be eradicated.

50. **Mrs. Abeysekera** (Sri Lanka) said that her country was committed to combating crime and drugs and to creating a regime of criminal justice, and had adopted a number of legislative measures and national and international mechanisms to that end. The Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters Act (2002) had enabled her country to take part in international mutual assistance, which was crucial to combating transnational crime. A number of bills designed to bolster the Constitution and judicial system were also under consideration: the Bail (Amendment) Bill, aimed at restricting the grounds of anticipatory bail; the Prevention of Computer Crimes Bill, which sought to criminalize misuse and abuse of computers; the Domestic Violence Bill, which provided for special remedies via protection orders issued by the courts; the Penal Code (Amendment) Bill, aimed at bringing trafficking and the objectives thereof within its remit; the Data Protection Bill, to protect unauthorized use of data; and e-commerce legislation, to provide a legal framework for electronic commercial transactions.

51. There were 50,000 heroin users and 200,000 cannabis users in Sri Lanka today, most of whom were young people. Her country was not only a party to several international drug conventions, but also implemented policies that reflected the spirit of those conventions. Its national drug policy of 1992 was being strengthened with a view to reducing drug abuse significantly by the end of the decade, and legislation to ensure sufficient precursor control was being drawn up with the National Dangerous Drugs Control Board, in close cooperation with the Regional Precursor Control Project of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's Regional Office for South Asia.

52. New legislation was also being prepared (a) on poisons and dangerous drugs, which made money-laundering from illicit drug trafficking a criminal offence; (b) to give effect to the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1988) and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Convention on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1990); and (c) to provide for the treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts.

53. Her delegation welcomed the efforts made by United Nations agencies, in particular UNODC, in helping her country to reduce and eliminate drug demand and supply.

54. **Mr. Choi** (Australia) said that people smuggling and trafficking in persons were serious crimes that challenged the right of countries to protect their own borders. Such activities had the potential to undermine the effectiveness and integrity of both the international refugee-protection system and legal migration programmes. His country was taking strong measures to combat those crimes, including prosecuting and extraditing the perpetrators. It had recently ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, and would shortly ratify the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. He urged all Governments to do the same.

55. To be effective, Governments needed to act together. Cooperation continued to be the hallmark of the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime, the membership of which included source, transit and destination countries as well as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration. An emphasis on practical workshops had helped foreign, justice, law-enforcement and immigration ministries in the region to be increasingly cooperative and effective in combating people smuggling and trafficking. His country would continue to work in the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime to achieve similar goals.

56. In June, delegates to the Bali Process Senior Officials' Meeting had agreed that some work, including legislation to criminalize people smuggling and trafficking, had been completed. They recommended that the Bali process should continue to focus on areas where it could add value, such as law enforcement and border control; trafficking in persons and child sex tourism; and mutual assistance and extradition. The Bali process web site would be further developed as a capacity-building tool.

57. The Bali process had underlined the importance of cooperation in the fight against transnational crime. As long as smuggling and trafficking persisted, his country would work with other Governments in the region to find transnational solutions.

58. **Mrs. Ahmed** (Sudan) said that the fight against drugs was a collective responsibility that called for a balanced and integrated approach that was in line with the Charter and international law, and fully respected the sovereignty and territorial integrity of countries and human rights. Her country was a party to international drug conventions. Those who fought the phenomenon deserved the support of the international community, and international cooperation was therefore essential.

59. Her delegation welcomed the fact that the Commission on Narcotic Drugs had continued to assess the progress made by Governments in meeting the goals set out by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session. Multilateral and bilateral cooperation at the national and regional levels was essential, as was support for developing countries. In that respect, she called on the international community to support African countries and African regional organizations. She emphasized the need to fight poverty in order to improve access to education and raise awareness among young people. She hoped that the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime would play a pivotal role through its programmes in Africa and thereby help strengthen the African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders. Her delegation welcomed international efforts to implement the plan of action to reduce drug demand. There was no room, however, for leniency; drug issues must be dealt with strictly.

60. The Sudan was one of the few countries where drug use had not reached alarming levels. However, it could be used as a transit country; efforts had therefore been geared towards that area.

61. Her country had established a number of crime-prevention mechanisms and was a party to many international and bilateral crime-prevention conventions. Her Government was in the process of implementing the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime and, in January 2004, her Government and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime had jointly organized a workshop on international cooperation on counter-terrorism and the fight against transnational organized crime in Khartoum. The workshop had culminated in the Khartoum Declaration on Terrorism and Transnational Crime, in which the States of the region had reiterated their commitment to fighting those phenomena and expressed their serious concern about the menace they posed for the region. They had also stressed their technical-assistance needs with regard to the ratification and implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols.

62. Her delegation welcomed the adoption of the United Nations Convention against Corruption in 2003; her country believed it was important to fight corruption at the international level, especially given its impact on peace, security and national economies.

63. **Mr. Meyer** (Brazil), speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, said that six years had passed since a firm commitment to overcome the world drugs problem had been expressed in the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Declaration emanating from the twentieth special session of the General Assembly. Despite considerable efforts by many, the objectives set out for 2003 had been only partially met, while those for 2008 appeared increasingly unattainable. Meeting commitments to reduce drug consumption continued, however, to be imperative.

64. The international community was far from meeting the goal of eradicating illegal drug production, trafficking and consumption, and constantly faced new obstacles and challenges. Drug-trafficking organizations had multiplied, diversified and merged with other criminal groups, complicating the work of judicial authorities. Many crimes were now associated with drug trafficking, such as contraband in chemical precursors and weapons, money-laundering, corruption, trafficking in persons, terrorism and ordinary crime. Moreover, drug consumption was increasing, particularly synthetic-drug consumption and especially among young people.

65. His delegation therefore urged all States to establish, implement, strengthen and improve controls on the trafficking, diversion and smuggling of chemical precursors and substances, to prevent the production of both natural and synthetic illicit drugs. The harmful effects of drugs could be seen at all levels of society and had various manifestations, such as in the increase in domestic violence, HIV/AIDS infection rates, environmental destruction and the destabilization of economic, social and political systems.

66. The issue, though not new, continued to be very serious; an integral and coordinated response by all Member States was therefore essential. Drugs affected all countries and his region was no exception. Despite considerable achievements in dismantling drug cartels, those groups had fragmented into small organizations which used new methods and routes. There was therefore a need for judicial systems to be continually updated, and for new strategies at all levels.

67. Various evaluation and coordination mechanisms had been established in recent years, such as the Organization of American States' Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism, which regularly measured the counter-drug activities of all countries in the region. The mechanism — which was the only one based on evaluation between equals and produced regular country and regional reports — had effectively combated illicit drug production and trafficking, and had allowed for unprecedented cooperation across the continent. His country therefore called on all States to consider setting up similar mechanisms in their own regions to pave the way for more effective international cooperation.

68. Illicit drugs had innumerable negative consequences, affecting all levels of society and threatening the stability of families, Governments and nations. It was essential for nations to continue fighting tirelessly against transnational criminal organizations by renewing their commitment to meeting the objectives laid down in the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Declaration.

69. **Mr. Dall'Oglio** (International Organization for Migration) said that people smuggling and human trafficking had become a major political and security issue for the international community and was the third largest source of profits for international organized crime, with an estimated $10 billion generated in profits and between 600,000 and 800,000 people trafficked each year.

70. His organization welcomed the fact that, since the previous year, two protocols supplementing the Convention on Transnational Organized Crime had entered into force and that the number of ratifications was fast increasing. However, the problem had not diminished in either size or scope, and tools and response strategies needed to be constantly readjusted. Greater international cooperation was essential in order to combat the problem and build more comprehensive migration regimes.

71. According to a recent study carried out by his organization, *Changing Patterns and Trends of Trafficking in Persons in the Balkan Region*, international criminal organizations involved in trafficking had adapted their methods to avoid detection and increase profitability, using legal travel documents, corruption, the Internet, telephone communications, female traffickers and other strategies to reduce visibility. So while on the surface the phenomenon appeared less evident, other serious forms of exploitation were widespread. A continuous effort was therefore needed to identify new modes of trafficking and to adjust national and international prevention, prosecution and protection responses to changes in the modus operandi of criminal groups.

72. Innovative approaches were also needed to replace irregular flows with regular migration channels. At a time of enhanced security concerns, it was important to foster public confidence in a reliable migration-management system, while at the same time not stifling the legitimate movement of persons or jeopardizing their privacy or personal rights and liberties. His organization was helping numerous countries to enhance their capacity in various areas, and continued to promote further ratifications of the Convention and its protocols and to support States parties in the complex measures necessary for their implementation.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.